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ALL MY LIFE



October 20, 1871—April 11, 1947.

ALL MY LIFE

Rev. A. E. Smith
An Autobiography



PROGRESS BOOKS
TORONTO

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95 KING ST. E., TORONTO 1

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PRINTED IN CANADA
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CHAPTER ONE

"Then You Shall Preach, Albert!"

I WENT West in 1890. I was a youth of some nineteen years of age. In June of that year, I finished my trade as a bookbinder with R. Duncan & Co., Hamilton, Ontario. My father came to the station to see me off. He bade me good-bye with some misgivings.

On July First I landed in Winnipeg, the key city of the great Canadian West. I recall my sensations as the long train pulled slowly over the creaking wooden bridge across the Red River and started up the lane towards the old station. It was a hot sultry day. Everyone was weary and dirty with days and nights of travel.

The car door opened and the trainman dashed into the car, shouting, "Winnipeg next station! All change!" Then the bustle and hustle began.

The station platform was already crowded with people. I piled out into the crowd. The platform was level with the tracks running along the north side of the station, a long, narrow brick building with a balcony.

Winnipeg of that day was a city in the making. There were some 90,000 people in the resident population. The sidewalks were wooden. The streetcars were drawn by horses. A little bell tinkled from the collars of the horses to warn pedestrians. The fare was five cents. There was some cedar block pavement

on Main Street. It was a hustling center of people from all over the world.

Outwardly they all looked very much the same. These new people were flowing into the West. I was going along with them. This great upsurge of humanity had caught me in its drag and pull. I felt the irresistible urge of what was to me a mighty cause. I had a mission. I had to go.

My first sight of Winnipeg filled me with wonder. But I could not stay. I left for the little village of McGregor, about a hundred miles farther west, where I was expected.

I landed there about six p.m. Everyone living in the village was away at the July First picnic. When the train pulled into McGregor station there was no one there to meet me. The only objects on the platform after the train pulled out were myself and my trunk.

I was desperately forlorn. I looked about for a few minutes. Then I walked over to what seemed to be a hotel. I met Mr. Watson, the proprietor, who told me I could stay there. We had newly baked home-made bread and hard-boiled fresh eggs for supper.

There were quite a number of other new arrivals at the table. We talked over our prospects. Someone asked me what it was that brought me to the village. I tried to tell these new friends what I was about to undertake. It was almost as much a revelation to myself as it was to them. They all said I was very young.

Two weeks before that day, I was at work in the bindery in Hamilton. Now I was face to face with responsibilities which linked me to many people in this village. Believe it or not, I was the prospective minister of the Methodist Church on the McGregor Circuit with four preaching appointments to be supplied every Sunday. At that moment it seemed to overwhelm me.

My appointment to this task had been conveyed to me in a letter from Dr. Woodsworth, Superintendent of Missions for the Methodist Church in the vast western region. His letter told me that I had been accepted as a candidate for the ministry. I would be expected to serve on probation for a time.

The arrival of this momentous letter had been a very great surprise to me. I did not know that my name had gone forward to the church authorities. I do not know to this day who sent in my name.

I had been very little help at home. My wages amounted to only \$14 monthly. This was not enough to keep me. So if I left home I would be actually relieving the situation. I had no idea what remuneration I was to receive as a probationer for the ministry. Nothing was said about it. I talked with my parents. They did not like the idea of my going so far away. It seemed to be a long, long way in those days. But they did not want to raise any barrier to my entering the ministry.

I showed the letter I had received to Mr. Lanigan, the foreman in the shop. He was not interested in the church. With some surprise he said to me, "Do you intend to become a preacher, Albert?"

I said, "Yes, that is what I want to do."

"Well," he replied, "I would advise you to take the first chance that comes. You cannot begin too soon. We'll give you leave from the shop any time you want. Good luck to you."

* * *

I had started out to get my first job at about thirteen years of age. I had gone seeking for work in many places: stores, offices, printshops, factories. My name was added to the list here and there. In some places I was told to come back in a week. At last I got a job in a fur store as a message boy. My wages were \$1.50 a week. I cleaned out the work-room upstairs, where the fur-cutter and the fur-sewers worked, making coats,

caps, collars and muffs. Beautiful things they were when finished. I had to carry most of them to their new owners. I worked in that firm, Wm. Acres, 12 King Street East, Hamilton, for nearly two years. Then, for two months I started to serve an apprenticeship in a railway machine shop. From there I went to the book-bindery.

Looking back over those days in the store, the machine shop and the book-bindery, I am convinced the environment and the workers had a very great and lasting influence on my later life. I was trained and educated by them. I became a worker.

It was part of my job to clean the machines and oil the bearings and pulleys. I made the paste for the bookbinders. I gathered up the waste paper and stored it upstairs. Often we boys used to take a rest lying down in the soft piles of paper.

Sometimes we badly needed a rest. I operated a stapling machine and a tifold binding machine hour after hour. I worked on a hand-operated cutting machine and one day I chopped the end off one of my fingers in a punching machine. Each week I made twelve to fifteen letter-press books for copying letters, which sold for as high as four dollars each.

The general attitude of these workers in those days seemed to me to be one of accepted inferiority. They did not care very much about it. They felt demeaned by the hard labor and long hours of toil. We had no union, no rights.

Three or four of them were drinkers. One of them used to get tight and he would go on a crusade to feed the hungry. He would buy a dozen loaves of fresh bread. I have seen him with his arms filled with loaves of bread going down the street to feed the needy. He forgot all about it when he was sober.

Our best bookbinder was a family man. His wages did not meet the needs of his household. His back was stooped with toil. He was a thoughtful man and would often speak in a cautious way to me about the heavy load he was carrying. I

understood very dimly. I felt the burden, but it was beyond the understanding of all of us in that shop.

In our home we all had to work, my two sisters, my father and my mother as well as myself. We were, as one of our ministers told me, among "God's poor." I was confused.

My father had come to Canada as Private William George Smith, a soldier in the Seventeenth Rifle Brigade, the Prince Consort's Own. He had run away from home and enlisted at the outbreak of the Crimean War. The fortunes of war had taken him as far east as the sands of Egypt, and he had seen many months of soldiering in the rocky island of Malta. His parental home was in London, England, where his father held some sort of petty official position.

My mother was a newcomer to Canada about the same time. Her name was Elizabeth Bilsen. The Bilsens were peasant stock of the England of the Victorian Era. They crossed the Atlantic in an immigrant ship, a sailing vessel which took some months to make the voyage. My grandfather Bilsen settled in Grey County, Ontario. Later, the town of Hanover was located about two miles from his farm. Elizabeth Bilsen met and married Pte. Smith at Quebec and my eldest sister, Ada, was born there, possibly in the barracks.

Upon the upsurge of the Fenian movement in the U.S.A., the Seventeenth Rifle Brigade was stationed in Hamilton. It was here that my father decided to quit soldiering. He secured his discharge and moved with his family to the city of Guelph.

This was only a few years after Confederation. The Franco-German War was raging in Europe. The first workers' government had made its short-lived appearance in the form of the Paris Commune. Under public pressure parliament passed a law making trade unions legal in Canada for the first time. In the midst of all these stupendous events on October 20, 1871 I was born.

Hamil
ton
Oct 20
1871

The best job my father could get at that time was in the Crow Iron Foundry, where he worked as a common laborer. To keep the home going it became necessary for my mother also to work. I was only a little lad but I can recall the strange sense of unhappiness that prevailed at times.

In 1879 Grandfather Bilsen died. The call came for my mother to go to the help of her aged mother. I remember going on the train with my kind little mother away up to Hanover. It seemed a long journey to me. We never returned to Guelph. My father and two sisters, Ada and Alvina, came to the farm. Shortly we moved to Walkerton in Bruce County. I had attended school in Hanover for one day.

For three years we lived in Walkerton. There still seems to be a glow about the memory of those years. I think they were my only time of childhood. We lived in a white frame house on a wide street leading up to the natural park called in those days "the Bend." There were no sidewalks on our street. I helped to take care of our two cows and did my share of peddling the milk to customers.

It was in Walkerton that I started to attend school. I seemed to make progress, though I was usually among the first to drop out in the spelling matches. Teacher Robb was nearsighted and he used to make frequent excursions up and down the aisles to find out where the pupils were seated. Exchanges of seats were always taking place.

Jack Swiggler, Charlie Maurer, George Fox and I were all in the same gang. We had our swimming hole and a baseball club, down on "the Bend" where the Saugeen River made a half circle hugging the steep bank of clay on the far shore and, in the spring, overflowing the park land. We used to act as training partners for the champion ten-mile walker of those days, Clarence Smith. He had a track laid out along the circle

of the river bank, and I have run at a stretch as much as eight miles with him.

George Fox became a noted violinist. I met Charlie Maurer once many years after in the town of Wawanesa, Manitoba, where he had a jewelry business. Jack Swiggler I have never seen again since those boyhood days. They were good boys. They were the boys of my brief play life.

It would be in 1884 that my parents decided to leave Walkerton and to seek some better condition in the city of Hamilton. It was a sudden change. I was about thirteen years of age. I attended the Hunter Street school for one year. My teacher was Miss White. She was the first teacher who ever succeeded in making arithmetic intelligible to me. I never did, until then, understand the purpose of going to school. And then my school years were suddenly ended. I had to go to work.

My father worked at painting and paper-hanging. We lived on Hunter Street and then on John Street. Canada's promised prosperity under the MacDonald Tory Government never came. The 1880's saw a very serious economic crisis. The Riel Rebellion broke out in the West. The corrupt government was handing out land to speculators and railroads, but refused to give the natives any rights to the land they already occupied. I knew nothing of all this, but I remember the endless despair of my father at conditions in those days.

My father was a very kind and generous man. His voice was quiet in conversation. His approach to others was gentle and friendly. He never practised the dogmatic temper of many who came from the Old Land in the Victorian Age.

I remember his last days after he and my mother came to live with us in the Brandon parsonage. Always he had to be urged to make known his ailments. One day he over-exerted himself making something for the boys. He fell and we had to assist him into the house.

He never rallied. I called on him one day to remember that he was a soldier and he must not surrender. "Ah, my son," he said, "I am afraid I cannot make it this time. Good-bye, my son."

A short time after his death there came a message from the British government addressed to him. It was an acknowledgment of the years of his service in the army with a medal and two bars attached and the certificate of the granting of a pension to him. That was in August 1914. It would have meant much to him. But the old soldier was gone. He never saw even this meager prize.

He had never been a very religious man. He was defeated in his own heart. The world had beaten him. Whatever hopes he had ever had of happiness had been dashed.

In all his life the only direction from which he ever heard a kind word or felt a helping hand was from the people of the Methodist church. He turned there for some easement of the everlasting struggle. He did not know why, but there seemed to be some release in these circles, some sense of human Brotherhood.

The first day I worked at Duncan's I made the acquaintance of Will Durrand, a transfer man of great skill.

I was helping to clean the rollers of the big press when he abruptly asked me: "What church do you go to?"

I told him I didn't go to any.

"Well, you will go with me next Sunday," he commanded. "I will come to your place and get you." He kept his word. The next Sunday he called at our house. I went along with him to his Sunday school.

This event was the opening of a new chapter in my life. It started from the first day of my attendance with him at the old Gore Street Methodist church. The people of this church were of the working class. They were zealous in their efforts to bring

members into the church and to make converts to Christianity. They had a helpful and friendly spirit in all their relations.

This atmosphere made a powerful and lasting impression upon me. As a young worker with no feeling of belonging anywhere, I was just the type of person to be drawn into the very center of such a body. I was seeking for the Brotherhood of Man. I became a member of the church by profession of faith.

In the Methodist church of those days a local preacher's license was given to anyone who passed a prescribed oral examination. In the course of time I came before a board for my examination. One member considered my standing in the examination very unsatisfactory. Rev. John Pickering, the minister, induced him to be tolerant and I got my license.

On the next Sunday morning I found myself trudging beside my critic out along York Street, past Dundurn Park and away on into the country west of Hamilton. I was to assist him in conducting service in a small country church. As we walked along the first mile my somewhat pompous companion gave me his orders:

"You will not speak to me, Albert, as we walk, because I shall be meditating on my sermon."

I agreed to this. As we drew near our destination he turned to me, breaking from his meditations, and asked, "Do you think you could preach?"

I said I thought I could.

"How long do you think you could speak?"

I said twenty minutes or half an hour.

"Ah," said he with some satisfaction, "then you shall preach, Albert." Thus it was suddenly decided that I should make my first attempt at public speaking.

My friend and I went up to the pulpit. There was a goodly congregation. The time came for the sermon. I had made no preparation. All I could think of was a text from the Scriptures.

I arose and announced my text. It was about the sower who went forth to sow and some seed fell by the wayside . . . It was a good, large and powerful text. But after announcing it I was overcome with fear. I could not think. I could not preach the sermon. There was a hard moment of silence.

Said I, "Dear friends, I think the best thing I can do is to sit down."

As I found a chair on the pulpit, my companion arose. He delivered a long solemn sermon.

On the return journey to the city he made painfully clear his opinion of me. I was a failure and a fool. He would oppose my going on as a local preacher. He would do everything to prevent my entry into the ministry. His condemnation as I walked along in sad dismay at his side made me determined to go on.

CHAPTER TWO

I Was There When the West Was Born

THE PROVINCE OF MANITOBA was established in 1870. It was a small province when I went West. Jokingly it was referred to as the "postage stamp."

In the early nineties I lived for several years with the people on their farms as a student preacher. The new settlers were bringing this virgin land under cultivation and organizing the first municipal governments for the full-handed future. For a nominal payment at the Land Office, the new citizen could get his claim to 160 acres. A small additional payment would give him another 160 acres. Think of it—320 acres of new land, untouched by any human artifices! It was marvelous. It gave a man a thrill to say to himself: "This is my land." It inspired hope.

I remember when many of the new people began to build their houses. The first house was usually made of logs with frame roof, and floors laid down on poplar stringers. Many of the homes had in the kitchen one of the old King stoves with a big fire box and with the oven placed high up over the back of the stove. What roaring fires we used to keep going in them!

The settler had to throw a fence around his property. The roads began to appear. The old winding trails had to be abandoned. It was with some sadness I saw them disappear. Then

the farmer had to break the age-old sod of the prairie and prepare to seed down his crop.

In those early days in Manitoba one of the worst scourges was the early August frost. I remember one Sunday night in August 1891. I was living with a farmer by the name of Meredith about eight miles out of Carberry. I left the house early in the morning to conduct services for the day in three places covering fifty miles across the plain. I had a dandy little horse and a two-wheeled gig. As I drove along towards home in the late evening it was the full of the moon and I could feel the coolness coming over the prairie. When I entered the house I found quite a gathering in the kitchen.

"It's going to freeze tonight," Joe Meredith said to me. "We have to fight the frost. We are going out to fire the smudges around the wheat."

I joined the watchers. At midnight the thermometer registered six degrees of frost. We could see a light burning on the top of a wheat elevator in Portage La Prairie some sixty miles away. This was the signal agreed upon if the frost came at midnight.

We started out to put fire to the straw smudges, which had been placed around two sides of the large field of wheat. There it stood in the steely moonlight, as fine a crop as was ever seen in the West.

We hurried along as fast as we could. Over 200 smudges were fired. Clouds of white smoke arose; some of it covered the wheat but most of it floated away over the green prairie. The wheat was doomed. In the morning you could shell out the grain in your hand and it was black. It was never cut. The farmer lost his land. He went away and started all over again. I saw him many years later. He was a wise old man.

This story was duplicated over and over again. The lessons of adversity are learned but slowly. There are farmers that

farm the land and there are those who farm the farmers. These latter have accumulated much wealth.

A curious feature about village life that originated at that time was the practice adopted by many of the people of assembling at the railway station to meet the daily evening train. It was the social rendezvous in McGregor. The west-bound local pulled in every night about nine p.m. and on it came the Winnipeg daily papers, a great boon to the country business man.

I remember one night I walked up the track after the train had gone and the crowd had dispersed. As I walked along in the pitch darkness I heard groans in the deep grass. I called out, "Who's there? Are you hurt?"

I found a man lying by the side of the track. "Why, it's you, Mr. Rogers," I said.

"Yes," he replied, "I jumped off the train and struck my face against this handcar standing here."

I helped him to his home and ran for Dr. Eaton. Several stitches had to be taken to help the badly cut mouth into shape again.

This was my introduction to the home of Mr. and Mrs. George Rogers. Our friendship grew with the passing years. He owned the mill in town. He became a politician and was elected by the Liberals to the Manitoba legislature. I used to discuss politics with him.

The Liberals were in office in Manitoba. Thomas Greenway, a stodgy, stout old farmer from Crystal City in southern Manitoba, was the Premier. His chief lieutenant was Clifford Sifton, brilliant lawyer and a powerful speaker, the Attorney-General of the province. He was the father of the Public School Law of Manitoba in 1890 which shook the base of church control of schools in the West. The Tory government at Ottawa conspired to upset this legislation. Tory Premier Mackenzie Bowell, a

past grand master of the Orange lodges, finally introduced legislation ordering Manitoba to grant separate schools to the Catholic church. This led to the defeat of the Tories in the federal elections of 1896.

Personally, I did all I could to help the Liberals. I preached the separation of the school from the church. I preached liberalism.

The Manitoba opposition party — the Tories — in those days had as their leader none other than the late Sir R. P. Roblin. I attended a political meeting where Roblin was the speaker.

"Now," said he, "as to this thing called the Initiative and Referendum, I know nothing about it, and therefore I am opposed to it."

* * *

At the end of three years' work as a probationer for the ministry, I was recommended to be entered as a student in Wesley College, Winnipeg. Imagine me, three years after leaving the book-bindery, making my entry into college halls.

For two years I attended classes in the old building on Broadway Avenue. The new college building on Portage Avenue was then opened. I was one of the first students to occupy a room in the dormitory.

Undertaking a college course covering a period of years was at that time no easy task for me. I lacked the preliminary high school work. I was without funds to meet the expenses of the courses. To be able to pay my way I undertook to preach on the Austin Circuit every Sunday. I soon collapsed from over-work. For several months I worked as a farm laborer trying to regain my health. After a desperate struggle I made my way back to college.

At the test exam, just before the finals, I got seventeen per cent in arithmetic. That was my weakest subject. My professor advised me not to write.

"But," I said, "I have to write."

"You will not get a pass," said he.

"I must pass," said I.

I remember the day the paper in arithmetic was to be written. I had to run to get to the exam hall before the doors were locked. I hurried to my seat, and had barely arrived when my nose started to bleed. The arithmetic paper was put before me. I picked it up and read it through. With great relief I put it down on the table and told myself that I could master it.

I did master it. To my astonishment and to that of my professor, I got second-class standing. I got my matriculation. The next term I finished my previous year in Arts.

I remember much of those days. I was a "theolog" but I enjoyed living. I played forward for three years on the second football team of the college. I was twice nominated president of the literary society and failed of election by six votes. I was a member of the first editorial board of *Vox*, the college paper, which is still alive. I was on the executive of the debating society.

On two occasions before public gatherings I took the lead on the affirmative side in debating the question: "Resolved that the social and economic causes of poverty so far outweigh the personal causes that despite all individual efforts to the contrary, a great many Canadians must remain poor." The subject excited wide interest. The affirmative secured the verdict. The work of preparing for this debate pushed me into a field of research which had an influence on my later studies and line of reading and speaking.

My last year at Wesley College found me confronted with a double year's work. The church was urging that I (and others) should go out into the field. I threatened to resign unless given another year at college to complete my course. In that year I

had to write thirty-five papers. Dr. Sparling, our kindly principal, dissuaded me when I consulted him about it.

"You will end in your grave, Smith," he said to me. But I secured twenty-nine firsts and six seconds. I was ready in June 1897 to be received as a fully fledged minister.

It was during my years at college that I met Maude Mercy Rogers of Regina who was later to become my wife. I knew the proprietor of a china shop where she was employed. One day he introduced me to her.

"Are you a Christian, Miss Rogers?" I asked.

"I am trying to be one," she replied.

"Trying to be one!" I exclaimed. "You either are a Christian or you are not a Christian." We had many a laugh through the years about my early dogmatism.

In June 1897 at the age of twenty-six I was ordained in the old Methodist church in Portage La Prairie. The church no longer stands.

I remember that in the summer of 1897 the construction gangs of the Canadian Northern Railway had built the right-of-way into northern Manitoba leading up into the rich Dauphin country. Beyond that lay the Swan River and The Pas and Hudson Bay areas.

Laurier had become premier the year before. He was now in London at Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. The United States frontier was vanishing. New gold discoveries had come in the Yukon. Canadian capitalism was in its heyday. Success beckoned newcomers to the country. Could not a worker take up free land? Could not a small capitalist become a bigger one? Could not a young worker become a minister? The new premier exclaimed: "The Twentieth Century belongs to Canada." But it was not long before the monopolies began to appear. Starting with the few hundred miles of railway on the Dauphin line, William Mackenzie and Donald Mann gained control of

the new Canadian Northern Railway system without investing a dime of their own money. Dominion and provincial governments guaranteed the bonds to the value of \$235,000,000 and gave the company big subsidies and land grants.

The first town on the C.N.R. after it strikes north into the Dauphin country was called by the euphonious name of Plumas. The town was located on the farm of a Scot named Jimmy Anderson, who named the town. It was a nice name and I have never found another of the same.

I recall the warm beauty of the landscape in which Plumas stood. The soil was rich loam and easy to work. To fertilize, all the farmer had to do was to deepen his furrow by a half-inch. Every foot of the land was irrigated by water shedding down to Lake Manitoba on the east and Lake Dauphin in the north. It was a wondrous land. I was filled with the idealism of youth.

I was the first Methodist minister in Plumas. I arrived on foot with my night robe and shaving outfit wrapped in a newspaper with my Bible and hymn book.

The church building was some distance from the new town-site. I went to Jimmy Anderson to ask for a lot on which to put the church.

"Ye speak very forthright," said Jimmy.

"I judge," said I, "you're a straightforward man yourself and you like plainspoken folk. I hope you will help us at this time."

"I'll come away over with ye, and we'll pick out the lot," said Mr. Anderson. We moved the church into Plumas, pulling it across the snow-covered fields with all the teams in the district.

I went to Regina where Maude and I were married on February 2, 1898 in the house of her father, John Rogers. He was a government Homestead Inspector, formerly of Bytown,

the early name of Ottawa. Maude was born in Carleton Place, Ontario, where her father had been a merchant for many years.

Jack Urngey, a farm machinery agent in Plumas, built a small frame for a house and covered it with ship lap. I rented the unplastered downstairs portion of this house and got together a few pieces of furniture, and in the early part of February my wife and I began our lives together there. My brave-hearted wife came as a young bride to this set-up, joining her fortunes in life with mine. Her companionship I have shared with joy through all the years between.

When the Methodist conference decided to move us from Plumas to Dauphin, we were glad. We very speedily got ready to move. We had a black mustang called Nellie and some vehicles. The C.N.R. provided a freight car and we piled Nellie and our stuff into it. The people all came to say good-bye.

It took us about eight hours to travel the hundred miles to Dauphin, where we arrived about ten o'clock at night.

The old voyageurs from the Rocky Mountains and the plains of the great West used to pass through this land. They had lodges on Lake Dauphin. They told stories of the big forests, of the wide meadows and the swift rivers. They told of the deer and the bear and the small game abounding. They used to paddle down the big Saskatchewan River for hundreds of miles into Lake Winnipegos, up the Mossy River into Lake Dauphin; then across to Lake Manitoba and to the plains where they made a portage to the Assiniboine River and on to Fort Garry on the Red River.

I have often visited the headwaters of the Mossy River. Standing on the wooden bridge, throwing our lines over the railing, we have hooked as many as fifty goldeyes in a few minutes, and then we would breakfast on the river bank at

the rising of the sun. They call them "Winnipeg Goldeyes" now.

It was during my first year in Dauphin that the stream of immigration from Europe began to flow heavily into the West. Sir Wilfrid Laurier had promised to inaugurate a "vigorous immigration policy." He had put Clifford Sifton in charge. In 1898 the first contingent of about a thousand Ukrainian people from Galicia arrived in Dauphin. Eventually some 140,000 of these fine people arrived in western Canada.

I saw them disembark from the train at Dauphin. They assembled around their leaders at the side of the track. In orderly array they marched away to the immigration hall. Slowly they moved, as if in a solemn procession. They were clothed in long sheepskin coats with fur caps on their heads. They seemed strong and confident.

A few miles north of Dauphin there was an area of low, cheap land covered with willow scrub. It was without any inhabitants. To this area the Ukrainian settlers were conducted by government agents. They transformed it into fine, fruitful land.

Our town was on the frontier. It was the point of convergence for those characters who came back from the wilderness and for those curious individuals who, filled with knowledge, were about to go forth to show what they could find. All types were there. Hunters and trappers from the woods and lakes driving into town with their dogteams dragging carrioles laden with skins; the hardy prospector carrying his samples of ore and hoping that, at last, he might have staked a fortune; the timber rangers; the Indian guides and the lumbermen; railway builders and river drivers and traders.

Against this varied background you must see me and my church. The free atmosphere of the frontier pervaded the church. These people came to the services. They did not

come particularly to hear me, but it furnished diversion for them.

In June 1889 we were sent to Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, to take charge of the Methodist church there. It was a move to another but a very different frontier. Prince Albert was isolated and far away on a frontier beyond which was a wilderness where no man lived.

From Regina to Prince Albert was about 250 miles by rail. It took twenty-four hours to make the trip. The engineering monstrosity called the Long Lake and Saskatchewan Railway was alleged to be operating the train service. The contract for the building of this road called for a subsidy of a certain sum per mile. They found many tortuous miles. For 150 of them there would not be seen a moving thing, unless it were wild horses, wolves or wild fowl. Over one million acres of land were sold across this stretch of country for one dollar per acre.

The buffalo had for ages made a great trek into this country in the spring of the year. A few miles below Prince Albert on the Saskatchewan River the vast herd would take three or four days to cross. I saw the trails and the wallows where these great beasts had tramped.

Prince Albert had a population of about 3000. Fifty per cent were of French-Indian origin. They were disrespectfully called "half-breeds" and were discriminated against as "inferiors." There were no settlers coming into the country. Instead, with the Yukon Gold Rush in full tide, there were many adventurers leaving by overland routes for the gold fields.

We lived in the Methodist parsonage, a lovely home. Our two daughters, Mercy and Cora, were born there. They still live in their native province, Mrs. Robert Hale of Moose Jaw and Mrs. Wm. Hill of Prince Albert.

W. J. Chisholm, one of the leading members of my church, was a government Inspector of Indian Affairs. He asked me one

day to go with him to visit a small tribe of Indians who were living in lodges hidden in the deep spruce forest on the other side of the river. He wanted these Indians to move to a reserve.

There were about two hundred of these Indian people. They were of the Sioux tribe. They were all that was left of the Indians who took part in the Custer Indian wars in the U.S.A. which ended in the so-called Custer Massacre. The brave who fired the first shot in that affair was alleged to be in this camp.

The parley, conducted by Inspector Chisholm, lasted all night. We were ushered into a large log building with earthen floor. The chiefs and medicine men sat at the far end of the room as we entered. They were smoking long pipes. They were strong hunters and woodsmen. They knew the wilds of the North. They were all big men. They knew that gifts of the white man always had some strings on them by which the Indian could be snared.

They quoted to us the case of "Almighty Voice." He was an Indian who somehow killed a cow belonging to a settler. He fled in terror from the police. They hunted him for weeks and cornered him in a bluff where he was killed. The story was told over and over in the wigwams and teepees. When told I was a minister of the church, they extended to me the protection of their gods. They refused to move. I thought I understood the position of the red man. No conquered and oppressed people have ever been more brutally treated than the North American Indians.

One day in the fall a little boy got lost in the forest. He was four years of age. His mother and several other women had gone over the river to gather blueberries. Presently someone missed the little chap and raised the cry, "Where is Bobby?" He could not be seen.

Night came. Rain began to fall. The police took charge. A camp was set up with tents and horses. Fires were kindled. The

night passed and no favorable report. The second day passed but no trace of the boy had been found. The police got dogs to help them track the lad. Holding the leash the officer would run along with the trained dog.

I folded away my papers and sermons and went to Maude and said, "There is no use my trying to make sermons for Sunday. There will be no one at church. I must go out and help to find the boy."

It was heart-thrilling to see the people turn out. Workers from the stores came out after the stores were closed on Saturday night. Farmers came with extra horses. All the people pooled their knowledge and experience. Best of all and most heartening was the appearance of a couple of old scouts. I remember the effect of their coming. Jim Scott was one of them. It was he who found the little fellow. He came upon him buried down in the underbrush beside the fallen trunk of a huge tree. The great-hearted man had blankets in which to wrap the little body. But Scott first took off his own sweater, warm from his body, and wrapped it about the child.

I remember the hour when this noble old scout came riding into camp with the little bundle in his arms. We ran wildly towards him shouting questions. Many wept for sheer joy, now suddenly released.

The mass feeling in the whole town can easily be imagined. Everybody was glad. We were all associated in one humane endeavor. "Smith closed his church," they told it over and over. No one objected.

I was sorry to leave Prince Albert in 1902. Despite the fact that I was a Methodist minister, many people of all creeds around the town were my friends. I knew personally T. O. Davis, our M.P., later Senator Davis. He was a pioneer politician of the West. He brought the railroad from the East. He had his own peculiar and effective methods of winning elec-

tions. His son, now High Commissioner for Canada in Australia, used to attend my Sunday school.

The law office of Hannon & Lamont, barristers, was well known to me. Both became justices. A. McDonald, our druggist, became the member in the first legislative assembly. He endured many of my sermons. J. B. Kernaghan's hardware store and Jim Donaldson's livery barn, I knew. And the printing shop of Mr. Stewart, where my *Lance of the North* was printed. And Captain Deacon's steam tug on which I often took trips for many miles up and down the river with the varied colored woods standing like battalions for miles on either bank. In that great forest I used to wander on horseback under the leafy roof.

As we were about to leave Prince Albert, we learned that the floods on the river at Saskatoon had carried away the shore abutment of the bridge. By a piece of good luck Jimmy Bryce got his locomotive across to the north side shortly before the bridge went out. If he had failed, we would not have been able to get away for weeks. Jimmy ran our train down to Saskatoon and here we had to climb over the stringers laid down across the flood, walk the bridge and board the train on the other side.

During my life in Prince Albert I came into contact with events and influences which turned my feet to the left in religion and politics. I was asked to prepare and present a paper at the district meeting of the church on the "Historical Criticism of the Bible." I still have the manuscript. The closing words were:

"Allegiance to truth does not require that anything be taken for granted; it does not demand that any finality be established as to the inspiration or authority of the Bible. The Bible must be treated like any other writing. It is not the originator of truth and justice."

I was searching for the truth.

CHAPTER THREE

I Rise to Protest

{ FROM PRINCE ALBERT I was moved to Winnipeg to become the minister of the MacDougall Memorial Methodist Church in the north end of the city. This was in July 1902. After three years of quiet residence in an isolated frontier town, we were thrust into the midst of a growing section of the Gateway City. There was a severe housing shortage, an almost chronic condition under capitalism. We could not find a place to live unless we were prepared to buy a house. After much searching we bought a place in north Winnipeg.

Some convincing idea of the sweeping tide of humanity which was set in motion by immigration can be grasped when it is known that in the ten years from 1901 to 1911 approximately 2,300,000 people flocked into Canada. Over 700 newcomers per day arrived. "America" was a magic word in Europe; Canada was merely part of America to the immigrants. Escape from an intolerable existence made them resolve to fly to America where they were promised land and freedom and bread.

Winnipeg was growing rapidly in every way. The people of the Red River Colony never imagined the city of 1902. The leaders of 1902 had no larger idea of the great future than had those of the Red River Colony. "Prosperity" was everywhere. Houses were being built by the score; sub-divisions in real

estate, those producers of "unearned increment" by which many have made fortunes, were "booming." New streets were being opened all over the town.

In the midst of this stood MacDougall Church on Main Street, with a wide frontage, an isolated building with vacant lots all about it. This church was not a widely popular religious center. This was made clear to me by the size of the congregation on my first appearance. It consisted of some thirty-seven people. The officials of the church had grave doubts about its future. It would seat about five hundred people. The immediate problem was to fill those seats. To this I laid my hand and heart.

The next year the board decided to put galleries into the church in order to accommodate more people at the services. Sometimes I noticed good saintly people fast asleep in the midst of the most profound disquisitions being delivered from the holy desk. But the pews were filled. Even with the gallery the accommodation was frequently overtaxed at our ordinary Sunday services.

The voters' list in north Winnipeg around that time contained about 1500 names. New names began to appear on it, names which were hard to pronounce and which sometimes were mentioned with a sneer by the henchmen of the blind, who did not understand the significance of these new people.

I was now ready to take a labor stand in politics. Arthur W. Puttee was a member of the House of Commons for the City of Winnipeg. He was a printer and published a labor paper called *The Voice*. He stood for re-election in 1904. Rev. Ben Spence was his election manager. The Conservatives and Liberals "fused" and named a wholesale druggist as candidate against Puttee. I remember speaking at an open air meeting on Mr. Puttee's behalf. I trust this did not account for his defeat. Later on he spoke at an evening service in my church.

During those days the C.P.R. carried out the construction of the new railway station and the Royal Alexandra Hotel. The subway under the C.P.R. tracks on Main Street was projected. It was only some seventeen years since the last spike had been driven on their transcontinental line.

I remember the first big labor strike in Winnipeg took place about this time. It was the strike of the employees of the Street Railway Company. These workers had organized a union. The strike came as a shocking surprise to Winnipeg. It was a grave offense, a cause of anger and displeasure.

It developed into bitter strife. The public took the side of the strikers. The street railway was tied up for many days. Scabs were brought in to operate the cars. The police patrolled the streets in fours and sixes.

The mayor of the city was contemplating reading the "Riot Act" to gain control of the streets. He called out the militia which appeared on Main Street at the C.P.R. construction project with rifles and fixed bayonets.

A long line of big freight cars had been shunted onto the spur track on Higgins Avenue. I stood on the top of one of these cars that day and saw a crowd of people which filled Main Street right down to the City Hall Square. It was packed from side to side. No traffic of any sort could move. I saw the militia file across the street. I hurried down into the crowd in front of the soldiers who were facing south.

A "scab"-driven street car came down the street, slowly working its way through the crowd. Someone yelled at the scab. Then a roar broke loose. The trolley was pulled off. The car was nearly upset. The uniformed men were given the order: "Present arms!" Up went the rifles. The front rank knelt down with the rear rank standing behind them. The next order would be: "Fire!" The crowd scattered quickly. The colonel rode down among those of us who did not run. He

shouted: "You better disband. Those rifles are loaded. If the mayor gives the order, we will fire. You will go down."

I was close to his stirrup when he spoke. The mayor, Tom Sharp, did not give the order.

The next week the strikers held a public meeting in Selkirk Hall on Logan Avenue. There were some 1200 men present at that meeting. I was invited to be one of the speakers. It was the first time I had ever been present at a big labor meeting. Unaware of the full meaning of what I was doing, I expressed the opinion that the strike dispute should go to arbitration. Dr. Sparling, my old principal at Wesley College, became chairman of the arbitration board. The final agreement conceded most of the strike demands.

Repercussions of these dramatic events were felt in church circles where I lived and worked. I was asked to make a statement at the district meeting on the strike. My own church board had on it certain members in whose opinion my conduct was unbecoming to a minister. On the other hand, the people were coming to my church. The people began to look upon my church as a voice lifted up on behalf of social justice. I began to draw a sharp line of distinction between the privileged class of Pharisees, who offered charity to the poor, and Jesus, who regarded himself as one with the poor.

In July 1906 we came to live in Portage La Prairie. Our family had been increased by the birth of a son, Douglas, who was a curly-headed little chap just beginning to walk.

In Portage the church owned a fine property. It was situated at about the center of the city. There was a large church building which would seat 900 people and a well-appointed Sunday school room. The parsonage was a well furnished home standing in the midst of a beautifully treed frontage. Behind the house was a large garden, of which good use was made by my

father who, along with my mother and sister, was a member of our family group. Our son Stewart was born at Portage.

The Portage Plains are a famous section of the great West. They have never had a crop failure since first cultivated for wheat production. The soil is inexhaustible. The system of underground irrigation has been supplied by natural channels from the waters of Lake Manitoba and the Assiniboine River. There seems to be an underground seeping of water beneath the whole land.

In those far-away days, I was personally acquainted with a young barrister who was later the Conservative candidate for parliament and who won the seat. He played tennis on the courts at the church. Now and then we would chat. Once or twice he came into my study and had tea. I heard his first speech in his first campaign. His name was Arthur Meighen. When he became prime minister years later, we were many miles apart.

In 1910 the Trinity Methodist Church, Nelson, British Columbia, invited me to be pastor of their church. It was a very attractive prospect. We made the move in the summer. Imagine a city of homes built half way up the side of a lovely mountain. The majestic Rockies stand all around the city. Every day the morning sun seems to look with fresh surprise on the city still nestling there among the heights.

On my suggestion the church bought a thirty-three-foot launch. I remember the first missionary trip made in our new boat, which I named the "Iwyll." We set out for Lardeau village at the very head of Lake Kootenay, the country of mines and huge glaciers. I was the cook on this trip. I had prepared a fine repast for my chairman and my captain. I had it spread on the table on deck. Just before we sat down to eat along came a big steamboat. The big roll of the waters upset my table and

spilled all my fine dishes. I needed an eloquent layman to speak for me at that moment.

We reached Lardeau the next morning. There were about 150 people living there. We received a hearty welcome. The hotel keeper offered us the use of his bar-room for a meeting.

"I will go around and tell the people," he said, "that you are going to preach in my bar-room. They will all come."

Fifty people gathered. I preached the sermon.

In Nelson I did not succeed very easily in building up my popularity in the circles of Trinity Church. During my first year, the news came along about the blowing up of the *Times* newspaper in Los Angeles, California. Tom Mooney and McNamara were accused. They were sentenced to life imprisonment. I made this affair the subject of one of my Sunday evening sermons. I protested against what seemed to me to have been an unfair trial and a harsh sentence. There were a number of new faces appearing in my congregation. The church was full. But the good people of the church did not seem to like my style of preaching. They did not seem to be familiar with such subjects.

It was in this inland city that I met my second labor strike. The employees of the city called a strike over some dispute with the city fathers. In the course of this, two of the strikers were arrested. I went to court to observe the trial proceedings.

I listened for a while with ever-increasing indignation. I felt compelled to rise in the court to ask the magistrate if I might be allowed to speak on behalf of the accused men. Permission was granted. The prosecuting lawyer asked if I was a lawyer.

"No," I answered, "but I am a citizen and I am concerned to see justice done. I know these men and I do not agree with the manner in which they are being treated in this court. I rise to protest."

It can easily be imagined what reaction such an occurrence

would create in our city. It stirred the people and it was surprising to see the support which came forward from unexpected places and persons.

It was not long after this event that there burst upon me a political storm. I had organized in my church a men's club. The president was a shoemaker, whose shop was a short distance from the parsonage. I had made his acquaintance. He was an unbeliever. He was a Socialist.

Sir Richard McBride was Premier of British Columbia. He called an election in 1912. The Nelson Socialist party decided to put up a candidate in this contest. They hired the theater for a meeting. They called upon me to speak. In a few days there appeared on the billboards large displays with my name and that of the Socialist candidate side by side. The Methodist minister and a Socialist named on the same billboard as political speakers!

The Grits and Tories "fused" their forces. They breathed forth threats. Some of them were officials of my church. When I came into my church study one day there were sixteen of the leading men of Nelson waiting. They declared I was dragging the name of the church in the mud. In the end one man broke the deadlock. His words I well remember. "We have for years been talking about getting a man here to preach who would speak the truth plainly. Now we have one, and as for me I am with the preacher until hell freezes over."

That speech was decisive. They, one by one, left the room. The mass meeting was an overflow. The Socialist got 184 votes, about twenty times as many as ever before.

I remember Jack Johnstone, agitator extraordinary, when he was in Nelson. He held street meetings and talked socialism and unionism. He was eloquent and caustic. I invited him to the parsonage for New Year's dinner. Demurring a little, he agreed. I told him I was interested to learn more about the

things he was talking about. He came with his wife. We all liked him. He made friends at once of our boys, Douglas and Stewart, who sat opposite him at dinner.

One day, twenty years later, a man came into my office at the Canadian Labor Defense League in Toronto.

"I am Jack Johnstone," he said to me. "Do you remember the man you invited to New Year's dinner in Nelson?"

I was overjoyed to meet him again. He was then a leading man in the United States Communist party. I had learned something of Marxian socialism from him in 1912.

We left Nelson for Brandon, Manitoba, in July 1913. I had been invited to be the minister of First Methodist Church there. It was one of the leading churches of the Manitoba conference. The board had called me in 1911, shortly before my arrival in Nelson. I accepted the invitation. In the interval I was also invited to serve a church in Vancouver. Much pressure was exerted on me to go to the coast church but I decided to go to Brandon. Little did I dream of what was ahead of me in making this choice.

It was during my term in First Church that I was first elected to an office in the conference. For five years I was chairman of the Brandon district. For two years of the five I was chosen president of the Manitoba conference, the highest office in the conference.

I was given a second term as president at the conference in Young Church, Winnipeg, in June 1917. The chief reason for this unusual action was, I think, the emergence of the question of Local Union Churches for the Methodist and the Presbyterian congregations in many of the small towns and villages. I was a strong advocate of church union. Dr. John McLean, Dr. W. A. Cooke and I were named as Methodist commissioners to be associated with a like number from the Presbyterian synod to pass upon each case of church union. There were fifty

union churches established during my period of office. This was part of the process that prepared for the great Union movement which, seven years later, brought forth the United Church.

When the war broke out in 1914, I was filled with doubt and hesitancy. I hated the idea of war. I was asked to hold services for the troops in my church. To this I consented. I became acquainted with a number of the officers. Later on I volunteered to become a Methodist chaplain. My name was listed but I was never called on to take service.

As time passed, I came to regard the war of 1914-1918 as an imperialist war, a war for mastery over the world, for markets and colonies, for indemnities and annexations.

A prominent business man of Brandon called on me one day at my church study. He was a well known Conservative. I received him with some expression of surprise.

"I have a special reason for calling on you today, Mr. Smith," he said. He then told me that he represented a group of business men in his party. They had been discussing what was to be done at this critical hour. They had agreed to visit me to propose that I should allow myself to be nominated as the federal candidate for Brandon. I listened politely. He was practically offering me a sure seat in parliament. I told him I did not think I would make the kind of candidate his group wanted.

A few days after this, I was called on the phone one evening by the chairman of the convention in the City Hall. It was about nine o'clock. The speaker told me my name had been placed on the list of nominees now before the convention which had been called to give support to the proposed Union government. Would I come to the meeting and express my views? In a few minutes I made my appearance. I declared I had no confidence in either of the old parties and could not see how

"union" would make much difference in them. I did not carry the convention.

The Union government was formed on October 12, 1917. The astute Arthur Meighen had sponsored the War Times Election Act in the dying parliament by which "the ballot was given to all wives, widows, mothers, sisters and daughters of Canadians overseas." By the same Act others were excluded. This law was passed by the frequent use of the "closure." The "Khaki Election" of 1917 returned the Union government with Borden again as Prime Minister.

The Brandon convention selected Rev. Dr. Whidden, President of Brandon College. He was elected and sat for four years. His political faith was contained in the proverb: "Speech is silver, but silence is golden."

Since those days much water has flowed down the Assiniboine on its way to the sea.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Sympathetic Strike

OUR RECEPTION on arrival in Brandon had been very cordial. The people of the church arranged to have us welcomed at the depot by a large committee of ladies and gentlemen. We were conveyed to the parsonage in a fine coach drawn by a team of beautiful grey horses. The parsonage was a commodious house, beautifully furnished. The ladies were "at home" to us upon our arrival. We all sat down to a dainty lunch. In the most friendly manner, as was to be expected, the good ladies had many questions for the new minister and his wife and family. The men, with that peculiar delicacy of the male sex, hovered about on the rim of the circle, endeavoring to inject a shy remark at studied intervals. It was friendly and enjoyable. How different was my departure some years hence.

The old type Methodist church organization had disappeared from First Church before I came. There were no class leaders. Prayer meetings attracted only fifteen or twenty members. Some of these elderly members still believed in evangelism of the old Gospel with its urgent individual appeal to the sinner to seek salvation.

I remember the mental and spiritual struggle through which I passed in those days. I had become quite unorthodox in my religious beliefs. To me the Gospel of Jesus was the proclamation of a new social order of human society. A purging heresy

hunt, as of olden times, would have flayed me. In my sermons no miracle was required to explain the birth of Jesus or His life and teachings. Jesus was not the founder of the church. He never formulated its harsh theologies. The mumblings and genuflections, the robes and censers and incantations of the church were completely foreign to Jesus, the Nazarene Carpenter. His name was to be cherished because He died as a leader of the people, for His principles and in protest against the unjust rulers of His day.

It was in Brandon I first heard about communism. The shock of the Russian Revolution was powerful enough to be felt even in Brandon. I realize after all these years, looking backward and trying to remember, that anything we did learn about the 1917 October Revolution was only a whisper which escaped suppression.

It is a sad confession to make but I must say that up till 1917 I had not read the *Communist Manifesto*. I was aroused. I began to seek information. I sent away for a number of books dealing with the teachings of communism. I got the *Manifesto*. I remember the first time I read it through. It was like a revelation of a new world into which I felt I must enter and to which I seemed to belong. I asked myself how it was that I had never heard of this marvelous document before. I began to preach about the great events taking place in Russia and about the great storehouse of truth I had found. I was only a preacher of the truth. I did not make the truth. I was simply telling the truth to the people. I began where I was. I saw that Jesus was a Communist. I linked his life with the old prophets, the great preachers of the Old Testament, who were early Communists. Of course they were not scientific but they stood for the principles of communism. They practised common ownership, and they believed in the Communist maxims:

"From each according to his ability, to each according to his need" and "He who will not work, neither shall he eat."

I preached sermons dealing in a factual manner with the Russian Revolution — with Lenin's life and teachings, with Stalin's leadership, and with the allied intervention. I was much perplexed and much alone. This historic upsurge came along, sweeping over the world. There were comparatively few who sensed its full meaning. I felt the impact of this mighty movement. I reached out to grasp it. I tried to bring some of its lessons to my people. I tried to help them to see the inspiring vision of the future of the world. I sought companionship in thought and endeavor. Who was there in 1917 and 1918?

{ One of the first things I did, which astonished my bourgeois friends, was to join the Labor party. This was something more than mere words. It was a move on my part to separate myself completely from my former associations with liberalism and the Liberal party.

During this period I became acquainted with Fred Dixon, an outstanding figure in the public life of Winnipeg. He was a Single Taxer, a follower of Henry George. He became identified with the Independent Labor Party, which spread out over Manitoba. It was the right wing in labor political activity. The Socialist Party of Canada was the left wing, with its chief center in Vancouver and with some of its adherents hiding in the northern woods.

{ One day a school teacher friend came along to me with a printed platform of the Labor party. I had never seen one before. The "ultimate aim" was declared to be "the transformation of capitalist property into social property with production for use instead of for profit." Then followed the more immediate planks: "public ownership of railways, telephones, franchises, water, lighting, etc.," "fullest and freest education," "abolition of all property qualifications in elections," "aboli-

tion of child labor," "equal pay for equal work for men and women," "proportional representation," "direct legislation through the initiative, referendum and recall," "against plural voting in municipal elections."

This platform of the Labor party commanded my sympathy and approval. I have been a direct adherent of the labor movement from that day.

Shortly before the Armistice the general conference of the Methodist church held its sessions in Hamilton. I returned to visit my old home town as a delegate to this conference. I was on the committee on Evangelism and Social Service. I was in the small group that composed the "left wing." We were not very far left, but we were the sensitive spirits who felt the electric currents that were striking through society. I remember the phrase, "amelioration of poverty among the people" in the main resolution. We moved to change "amelioration" to "abolition."

One brother rose and said: "I think I smell socialism here. It is very dangerous."

"You are quite right," I replied. "You do smell socialism here and sooner or later you will likely taste socialism." Our motion was carried.

Then we brought on a proposal to declare for the principle of "production for use instead of for profits." It was a sensation. It was carried in the committee and embodied in the report. On the conference floor a wordy battle ensued. One of my friends poked me in the back and said: "It'll never be carried, Smith. Your pet is going to be slain." But it was carried. When the vote was announced, the sessions immediately dispersed. We moved in silence to the exit. I was reflecting on the names of Jesus and Lenin—Jesus, of the first century, who shook the foundations of the rotten tyranny of the Roman Caesars —

Lenin, of the 20th century, who laid low the corrupt Czar of the Romanoffs.

Big capitalist magnates who sat in the higher councils of the Methodist church took special care to see that few men who supported that resolution got to the front. It was the first time such a Socialist thought had ever been enunciated by this church body.

Back in Brandon I remember visiting the office of one of my prominent church members. He was a barrister and local member of the provincial legislature. I told him I had joined the Labor party. He was quite annoyed with me. He told me I would ruin my future prospects. I had no idea what changes the next few months would bring for me.

Events were moving rapidly. On December 22, 1918, the famous Walker Theater meeting took place in Winnipeg. It was called jointly by the Trades and Labor Council and the Socialist Party of Canada. The meeting protested government orders-in-council under which Isaac Bainbridge in Toronto was imprisoned for publishing the banned *Canadian Forward*, official organ of the Social Democratic party. Protest was made against the arrest of seven men in Sault Ste. Marie for belonging to the Social Democratic party. They had been fined \$16,700 and many others had been arrested throughout the country. S. Blumenberg spoke in praise of the heroism of Karl Liebknecht in Germany. R. B. Russell, Secretary of the Metal Trades Council, moved a resolution demanding the withdrawal of all military forces from Russia. The meeting closed with three cheers for the Russian Revolution.

On March 13, 1919 in Calgary the Western Convention of Trade Unions was held in defiance of the official Trades Congress. There were 237 delegates present. They decided to form the One Big Union. Resolutions were adopted for a shorter work-week, for increased wages, for release of political prisoners

and repeal of all orders-in-council restricting freedom of speech. The convention placed itself on record "as being in full accord and sympathy with the aims and purposes of the Russian Bolshevik and German Spartacus Revolutions" and demanded the withdrawal of armed forces from Russia.

On May 1, 1919 the Winnipeg strike broke out. The great post-war upsurge of labor had begun in western Canada. It swept the West like a prairie fire. Brandon was second only to Winnipeg as a storm center. The Brandon civic employees were on strike from the first.

On Thursday morning, May 1, a convention was held by the Building Trades Council at the Industrial Bureau in Winnipeg. There were over 1200 workers in the trade gathered there that day. The situation was fully reviewed before this meeting. It was shown that the council was asking for an increased wage of 20 cents per hour. Since 1914 the cost of living had been increased 75 to 80 per cent. In the same period the increase in wages in the building trades amounted to only 18 per cent. The average work period in the industry was 32 weeks which, with a 44-hour week and a 65-cent-an-hour rate, gave the worker an income of about \$915 in the year. A family budget, providing only bare essentials, would total well over \$1500. The Builders' Exchange admitted the demands of the workers to be "reasonable." Yet they said "We cannot pay the increase."

This was a class decision, not a mere local attitude of the Builders' Exchange. They said: "The bankers refuse to do business on the new basis." This was categorically stated at that time as the reason why the increased scale could not be accepted.

I was struck by the nation-wide, class-against-class issue involved in what, at first, seemed to be a small wage question. The Tory Premier, Sir Robert Borden, had signed documents at the peace conference in France proclaiming labor's right to

collective bargaining and the eight-hour day. But all the evidence showed that the government at Ottawa was blocking labor's demands in Winnipeg in an effort to discourage the rising movement across the country.

Metal workers in three large firms — including the Vulcan Iron Works — met the same refusal as the building trades. The Metal Trades Council had negotiated for over a year in an effort to secure: 1) the nine-hour day (they were working ten hours), 2) higher wages, 3) union recognition. In the railway shops the metal trades had already won these demands under the so-called McAdoo award in the United States, which was extended to Canada.

In my own city, the 500 civic employes demanding higher wages, seniority and union recognition, met the same stubborn refusal. The city fathers were told by the bankers not to grant the requests. The class order had gone out to block and reject labor's proposals.

By 1119 to 74 the building trades convention in Winnipeg voted to strike. The Brandon civic workers voted unanimously for strike action. The next day the Winnipeg metal trades walked out.

From the outset I was in the thick of the battle. I preached on the strike. I declared the cause of the strikers to be right and just. This gave offense to the opponents of the workers in my church. This was the parting of the ways. I felt a loyalty to the workers that was stronger than any other. I had come from the working class.

I was a member of the Trades and Labor Council, representing the Ministerial Association. That seems strange today. I was very close to the strike committee and was consulted by them at every turn. I offered to assist them in every way. They soon found much for me to do. I helped prepare the strike bulletins. I spoke at the great open-air meetings called by the

strike committee in the city parks. I marched at the front of the street parades. My church was opened to the strikers who, on one occasion, marched in as a body. This procedure on my part was sensational, second only to the strike itself. But it was valid sensation.

I remember one large mass meeting one fine evening in May. I saw in my audience the mayor, several aldermen, the local member of parliament and a number of the leading professional men of the city; lawyers, doctors and teachers. I sharply directed my words to these. I called on them to come up to the platform and make known their views on the issues now before us in the strike. "I believe this strike for better wages and better living is right. I am helping all I can for that reason. If you think we are wrong, come up here and point out where we are wrong." There was no response.

Before the middle of the month the climax of the strike was reached at a mass meeting in the City Hall. The situation was tense, arising, in part, from the mounting crisis in the Winnipeg strike being played up daily in the press. The hall was filled. The purpose of the meeting was to afford an opportunity to the mayor and council to state what they were going to do. I began to speak by indicating the critical situation which was developing in Winnipeg. I asked when the council was going to make a decision on this strike. In my opinion the demands of the workers should be adopted, and if I were the committee, I would give the council one hour to bring down this decision or the strike would be extended. The crowd supported my view. Professor Gee of Brandon College was in the audience and in response to an invitation from the chair, he came forward and expressed his enthusiastic support of the strike.

In a few minutes the mayor came into the room and, in a short speech, informed the audience that a decision had been reached by the council to recognize the employees union. At a

joint meeting that night it was decided to refer other matters to arbitration. I was asked to sit on the arbitration board, but I felt that I had been too stormy a factor in the battle. The strike was ended. The workers' demands were largely conceded.

But little did we dream what was ahead for us in those days. On May 15 the call for the sympathetic strike was issued from the strike committee in Winnipeg. Trade unionists of Brandon held a meeting at once to discuss the situation. After full discussion, despite the unfavorable position we were in, it was decided to answer the call and most of the union workers in Brandon went out on strike again in solidarity with their comrades in Winnipeg and all the West. Storm signals were out.

In Winnipeg there had been a vote, local by local, on the general strike. On May 13 fifty-eight locals had reported. The vote was 8667 to 645 for the strike. Over 25,000 workers walked out in Winnipeg. Over 100,000 workers altogether in western Canada answered the call.

Winnipeg was literally tied up. Ninety-five local unions came out a hundred per cent strong. The municipal employees came out with the firemen of Winnipeg and St. Boniface. The city police voted for the strike in the ratio of 149 to 11. The postal workers came out and suffered much for their loyalty. Cooks and waiters came out on strike. The telephone operators closed down the works. The printing pressmen came out and for several days Winnipeg newspapers were shut down.

The mighty power of the working class was immediately evident. This was not a revolutionary struggle for power. As I look back now I know that the leadership from the beginning was itself afraid of the great power of the strike. There was no working-class party with a conscious understanding of this power and what should be done. The strike leaders in Winnipeg told the workers to stay home. They tried to keep the }

struggle on a purely economic plane. And in the end they called off the strike without consulting the workers. Yet objectively here was revealed more clearly than by any other event in Canadian labor history the elemental factors of working-class power.

The police and firemen remained on duty by decision of the strike committee. Water supply was maintained at only sufficient pressure for domestic use. The distribution of milk and bread was under the committee's supervision. By agreement with city council, each wagon carried the famous card: "Permitted by authority of the Strike Committee." All companies with rigs on the streets had to come to the Labor Temple to secure these cards.

Veterans just back from Flanders were represented on the strike committee. On the date of the call for the general strike a meeting of the veterans was held in the Board of Trade Building. The main resolution at that meeting, coming from the executive, was against the strike. It was rejected and a resolution endorsing the strike was made from the floor and adopted by the meeting. Soldiers in barracks, not yet discharged, were ordered on strike duty by their officers. They refused to obey.

Under conditions of a nation-wide political crisis the Winnipeg Strike Committee would have become an organ of truly democratic power.

CHAPTER FIVE

A Mighty Cause at Stake

THE ANGRY EMPLOYERS organized the "Citizens Committee of 1000." This was the special concentration of authority set up to fight the strike.

On Thursday, May 15, at 12 noon, the city council of Winnipeg held a special meeting. Mayor Gray presented a letter from the strike committee asking him to bring about a settlement of the strike. He had met the representatives of the metal trades employers on Wednesday. He had urged a settlement. Their reply was that they had been requested by the "Citizens Committee of 1000" not to open any negotiations with the strikers. They were acceding to that request.

One of the aldermen asked the question: "Then the Citizens Committee is standing in the way of a settlement?" It was not denied.

Arthur Meighen, acting Minister of Justice, and Senator Gideon Robertson, Minister of Labor, hastened from Ottawa to Winnipeg. Eastern financiers were alarmed. J. Pierpont Morgan was demanding stern measures to crush this revolutionary wave in western Canada. This may have been Wall Street's first direct order to Ottawa. Since then, of course, the procedure has become well-established.

The two ministers were met at Fort William by members of the citizens committee. A special delegation of this committee

boarded the train outside Winnipeg. I remember speaking of that incident as unfair and pointing out that the strikers had never had an opportunity to present their case to the ministers. At that stage I was taken in by the pretense of the ministers that they had come to work out a settlement. Events later proved that they came to break the strike.

On June 14 I spoke at a strike meeting of 8000 people in Winnipeg. I said it was next to impossible for a preacher to preach the genuine gospel of Christ in the church. I described the resolution calling for a radical reconstruction of society that had been adopted by the Methodist church conference. Rich men had threatened to leave the church.

"Let them go," I said. The church that thought more of real estate than of principles had no place in the life of society. I said the bankers' association was a One Big Union. Lying back of all unrest was the profit system. It had been tried and found wanting. The great mass of humanity was aware of this, I declared.

Mr. Meighen put on his act in Ottawa. Parliament was in session. The Winnipeg strike was on the agenda every day. At this time the government was floating a loan of \$100,000,000 in New York and the money men demanded new suppressive legislation as a condition for the granting of the loan. On June 6 Meighen re-introduced the Immigration Act. Two days before it had been amended, passed and signed by the governor-general. The new amending bill removed the right of trial by jury of all British-born persons and made them subject to deportation on the order of a secret board. It was carried in twenty minutes, rushed through the senate and conveyed by special messenger to the governor-general for signature. From first to last the procedure took forty-five minutes under the guiding hand of Mr. Meighen.

Later this artificer of laws produced the notorious Section 98

which provided for the suppression of any organization alleged to advocate the overthrow of the government by force and violence. All charged with this offense were to be held guilty until proved innocent, a reversal of the ancient right that held a man innocent until proved guilty. This law too was rushed through the legislative mill in a matter of minutes and was ready for use. It served then to intimidate some people, but no charge was laid under it until twelve years later.

On June 17 in the early morning hours 500 special constables and fifty Royal North West Mounted Police were mobilized for city-wide raids. Ten men were arrested on special warrants. Their homes were ransacked and they were pulled out of bed. Eight of the leaders were charged with seditious conspiracy. They were: William Ivens, founder of the Winnipeg Labor Church, George Armstrong, well-known Socialist party speaker and member of the strike committee, R. E. Bray, chairman of the returned soldiers, Aldermen A. A. Heaps and John Queen of Winnipeg's Ward Five: R. B. Russell, Secretary of District Two of the Machinists' Union, which included all machinists in Canada, R. J. Johns, also of the Machinists' Union, and W. A. Pritchard, Socialist party speaker and representative of the Vancouver Trades and Labor Council. On the third day after their arrest they were brought before a board of inquiry meeting at Stony Mountain penitentiary so that they might have a secret hearing and be deported under the amended Immigration Act. That this was not carried out was due solely to the storm of protest that arose across the whole of Canada. Months later, they appeared in court. Their trial was a travesty on justice. They were sentenced to twelve months' hard labor and, I believe, Russell was singled out and sentenced to two years. Five foreign-born workers, arrested with the others, were released under pressure of public opinion.

I was attending the Methodist conference in Winnipeg at the

time of the arrests. Next morning before going to the conference I went to the office of the *Western Labor News* at the Chamber of Commerce Building. I found the office wide open, littered with torn papers and the furniture thrown about. The police had made a raid.

On entering the conference I asked for the privilege of speaking for a few minutes. I displayed the daily paper with headlines of the arrests, and spoke on the strike struggle and described the arrests. I proposed a resolution of protest calling for the release of the men.

Following the arrests the Royal North West Mounted Police went all over the Dominion searching for "evidence." It was a typical police "witch hunt." They gathered large quantities of books, pamphlets, letters and other material later produced in court. The main "evidence" consisted of many copies of *Capital* and *The Communist Manifesto*, by Karl Marx, *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific* by Frederick Engels, *Political Parties in Russia* by Lenin, *Manifesto of the Socialist Party of Canada*, published in 1908 and *The Class Struggle*, by Karl Kautsky. Mr. A. J. Andrews, leader of the Citizens Committee of 1000 and prominent Methodist, was appointed acting Deputy Minister of Justice to conduct the trials.

"In view of the tons of literature seized," he said, "we feel confident of securing a conviction."

Bill Ivens joined MacDougall Church when I was pastor in 1904. He came to the carpet bowling and the men's club. He was a gardener. He desired education. I told him to start studying right away. In June 1909 he finished his B.D. course and I moved his ordination as a Methodist minister. In 1914 he resigned from the church in protest against the war. When the strike began in 1919 he was editor of the *Western Labor News*, which became the organ of the strike committee, published daily for a time.

After Editor Ivens had been taken away, it was Fred Dixon who took up the editorial pen. It became a powerful pen. In short order he was summoned to appear in court on charges of publishing seditious libel. One of the outstanding events of the hectic days of 1919 was the trial and resultant acquittal of Fred Dixon.

He conducted his own defense. For several days he faced the ordeal of a frowning judge, accusing lawyers and doubtful faces in the jury box. He spoke to the jury for seven hours. It was a forceful defense of civil rights. The city council of Winnipeg had adopted a resolution favoring collective bargaining — this was part of the "evidence" against Dixon.

"Grass will grow, the river will reach the sea, the boy will become a man and labor will come into its own." Thus wrote Dixon in 1919 and they charged him with "publishing seditious libel."

J. S. Woodsworth landed in Winnipeg in the midst of the strike and just before Dixon's arrest. He became the editor of the strike bulletin when Dixon was taken.

In less than a week he too was arrested and an indictment for seditious libel was preferred against him. Count four in the indictment contained quotations from *Isaiah* 10:1-2: "Woe unto them that . . . take away the right from the poor of my people." And *Isaiah* 65:21-22: "And they shall build houses and inhabit them, and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat."

Truly this was sedition.

But the Tories had gone too far. The acquittal of Fred Dixon was the voice of the people calling off the burlesque. The charges against J. S. Woodsworth were withdrawn. It was a victory for the people.

I first met J. S. Woodsworth in college halls. He was a senior

in Wesley College the year I entered. He was regarded as one of the leaders of the college. He used to play half-back on the senior soccer football team in the intercollegiate league. I remember many of those games. Woodsworth was a good half-back.

His attitude on the war brought a demand for his resignation from the church. As fate would have it, I was the president of the conference to which he addressed his resignation in 1918. He declared that in his experience he learned "how difficult it is to help the people through the church." He denounced war as a crime. "I had thought that as a Christian minister I was a messenger of the Prince of Peace." In 1921 he was elected to the Dominion house. Twelve years later he became the founder and leader of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation. He was one of our group of Methodist ministers who left the church and came to the labor movement. Some were not converted to the teachings of the working class, scientific socialism. Rather, as the years showed, they brought to the working class the liberal-reformism of the middle class. The years took us on divergent paths. But, unlike the present leadership of the C.C.F., J. S. Woodsworth was a staunch opponent of imperialist war.

After Woodsworth's arrest, I believe the strike bulletin was edited briefly by Dr. Salem Bland. I spoke together with him at one of the Winnipeg strike rallies.

Dr. Bland had come to the faculty of Wesley College shortly after I had graduated. He was a grand teacher. He was a friend of the people, always a champion of freedom.

The storm broke about him in the college board during the year that I was president of the conference. I was a member of the board. There was some sort of an investigation. Opposition developed to those who were plotting his dismissal. Their

method, finally, was to dismiss the whole staff. All were re-engaged with the exception of Dr. Bland and Dr. Irwin.

I moved a motion calling for their re-instatement. The chairman of the board was a fiery little man who was a big merchant of some kind. He became quite angry with me. He was astonished at my boldness.

"In the face of all that you have heard tonight," he cried, "do you persist, Mr. Smith, in making such a motion?"

I replied that I had heard nothing which would dissuade me from doing so. I could not get a seconder, I am sorry to say, despite the fact that there were some eleven ministers at the meeting. That was in 1918. Now, a year later, Bland, Ivens, Woodsworth and myself were all drawn into labor's upsurge.

Senator Gideon Robertson started his strike-breaking plan with the postal workers who had joined the strike by a vote of 250 to 19. On May 25 he called a meeting of these workers. Few came. Then each one received a "Form of Contract" repudiating strikes and all outside trade union affiliations. It was to be signed by May 27; those refusing to sign were to be dismissed from the postal service. Only sixteen signed.

The same strike-breaking plan was adopted by the police commission. Every policeman was fired. In Brandon, I believe, even the chief was fired. The city council adopted the same scheme with the civic workers.

The Citizens Committee of 1000 was openly preparing for the violent suppression of the strike. Special constables were being recruited and drilled in school grounds and barracks throughout the city. All former army officers were called up. The commanding officer declared that he wanted men who were prepared to shoot to kill. Great demonstrations of ten thousand and more veterans and strikers marched to the provincial legislature and sent deputations in to speak to Premier

Norris. Similar demonstrations were held at the City Hall. The mayor issued a proclamation banning parades.

On Friday evening, June 20, the returned soldiers' committee decided to call a "Silent Parade" for the next day to march to the Royal Alexandra Hotel and demand of Senator Robertson an account of his activities. The following morning Mayor Gray read the "Riot Act." About two-thirty in the afternoon the parade began to form. Some fifty mounted men, armed with baseball bats and revolvers, rode down Main Street. The crowd opened and let them through and closed in behind them. They turned and charged out of the crowd. Two horses were riderless. Then, with revolvers drawn, the mounted men galloped down Main Street. Suddenly they turned and charged right into the crowd on William Avenue, firing as they rode. More than thirty citizens fell wounded on the street. One man was killed, a bullet through his head. It was "Bloody Saturday." The shooting was the signal for lines of special constables to move across Main Street. Squads of men, armed with rifles and under command of army officers, took up positions at all main street corners. The city was under military control.

Meanwhile I faced a special meeting of the official board of the First Methodist Church, Brandon. I think it was held on May 26. I remember there was a good attendance. Rev. C. W. Morrow was asked to act as chairman. A resolution was submitted by one the leading men asking "that the minister be restrained from any further preaching in First Church."

In the discussion some accused me of starting the Winnipeg strike. Others said that I was opposed to the war and had called the soldiers "murderers." It was stated that I was not a Christian and had never been converted.

When all had spoken, I asked the mover if he was a member of the "citizens committee" and if his motion had been planned in that body. He admitted the point of my questions. I then

showed them the *Discipline of the Methodist Church* which prescribes the correct course to follow if a minister is open to a charge of bad conduct or any misdemeanor. I asked this man if he would write out a charge against me and sign his name to it and others might sign it, and let this charge go to the proper church court for an investigation.

He would not make a charge against me. No one in the room accepted the challenge to do so. I expressed surprise at this refusal. I asked how they could possibly put forward a resolution of this sort without a charge, without an investigation, without evidence recorded and findings being given. The motion was withdrawn. I was then plainly asked what I would do in the face of the attitude of the board.

The climax came on Sunday evening, June 8. On that day I preached my last sermon. I took as my text the words of Jesus when He came to His Disciples in the Garden the night of His betrayal, and found them asleep in the dark. He said: "Sleep on now and take your rest. Behold the hour has come."

I set forth the claims made by the strikers, basing my address on the teaching of Jesus, the Brotherhood of Man. An uprising of the common people, struggling for their just rights, calling for justice, for a better world in which to live and let live — was not this a real revival? I believed it was. But the church stood aside. The church was afraid it might give offense to the rich and powerful.

My main words were about the strike. The war had been long. Thousands of Canadians had made great sacrifices. The soldiers were returning. Big promises had been made to them, but there had been small and paltry efforts, so far, to keep these glowing promises. The workers and veterans were now unitedly demanding action by the government to give effect to the promises made by Sir Robert Borden when he was overseas.

'The organized workers should be recognized and living wages should be established.

At the conclusion of my sermon, I made a statement as to what I intended to do. I agreed that the people who built this fine church had the right to say how it should be used. But the church was not an end in itself. The end was the building of the Brotherhood of Man. That was the new social order, which was now beginning to take shape among men. It meant the abolition of poverty.

I preached in the church at seven p.m., and at eight p.m. I went out to one of the city parks to speak to a mass meeting of some 2000 people to tell them, also, what I was going to do. I told them I had left the church and that I would carry on outside. I proposed to organize a People's Church in Brandon.

To see all the woven elements of one's life and chosen ministry torn apart and flung away was not a pleasant experience. I was ostracized by my former friends who were the leading citizens of Brandon and members of the First Methodist Church. They excluded me from their homes where I and my wife and family had often been entertained as the best of friends. But there were greater things at stake. There was a mighty cause at stake — the Cause of the Working Class. I began to sense the historic meaning of the struggle.

CHAPTER SIX

The Moores and Crerars Had Other Plans

I RESOLUTELY took up the work of the People's Church in Brandon. Meetings were held on June 22 and 29. A church committee of twenty-one men and women was named, of which the chairman was one of the art teachers of the public schools and the secretary was a reporter on the local paper. Other members were a city alderman, an accountant, a railroad conductor, a trade unionist, a motor mechanic, a musician, a trained social worker who took charge of the work among the children and women.

The idea of religion as being associated with atonement by blood for sin was wholly abandoned. Salvation was the responsibility of society. Man must save himself or he would never be saved. The basic principle of salvation was to be found in *work*. Productive work and the distribution of its fruit by organized scientific methods would heal the ills of humanity. Poverty, ignorance and war, the plagues of mankind, could be abolished by human work.

My search for human Brotherhood had brought me to Christian socialism. I embodied my conception of it in the ten ethical precepts for young members of the People's Church:

1. Love your schoolfellows, who will be your fellow workmen in life.
2. Love learning, which is the food of the mind; be as grateful to your teachers as to your parents.

3. Make every day holy by good and useful deeds and kindly actions.
4. Honor good men, be courteous to all men, do not flatter or fear anyone; bow down to none.
5. Do not hate or speak evil of anyone. Do not be revengeful, but stand up for your rights and resist oppression.
6. Do not be cowardly. Be a friend to the weak and love justice.
7. Remember that all good things of the earth are produced by labor. Whoever enjoys them without working for them is stealing the bread of the workers.
8. Observe and think in order to discover the truth. Do not believe what is contrary to reason and never deceive yourself or others.
9. Do not think that those who love their country must hate and despise other nations, or wish for war, which is a remnant of barbarism.
10. Look forward to the day when all men and women will be free citizens of one fatherland and live together as brothers and sisters in peace and righteousness.

I was the leader, but not by any means the only one to encourage and guide. Members of the committee would often take part in the public services. On frequent occasions we had visiting speakers from the labor movement and sometimes from the orthodox church. I remember how gravely some of my former brethren used to question me as to our form of service: Why did we not read the Bible? Why did we not make prayers?

I remember those four years of hard work. I can see now the contrast which it all makes with the workers' movement of today. We were daring and bold, but we were lacking in knowledge and experience of the ways of the wilderness.

In 1920 I went to Calgary to establish the People's Church there. One evening we were assembled in committee in one of the rooms of the public library when a telegram was handed to the chairman addressed to me. It was a wire from the Brandon Labor Party, advising that I had been named by them to contest the Brandon seat in the coming provincial election. They wanted a reply.

I did not expect to be elected. I said the people would think

me a coward if I refused to accept. "When the campaign is over," I said, "I will return to Calgary and take up our plans and go to work here." This was agreed upon.

The date of the provincial election was June 29, 1920. We had about five weeks' campaigning. There never was a more enthusiastic or more united band of workers than those who gathered about my nomination in that election fight.

It was a three-cornered fight. The Liberal candidate was the sitting member, a clever lawyer. The Conservative candidate was a brigadier-general recently returned from the war. These were my opponents in the fray.

The Brandon Labor Party was an independent organization. From the very beginning, large public meetings were held with overflow audiences. Street meetings in the fine June evenings were attended by large numbers in every part of the city. We carried the fight into the homes of the people in afternoon teas and question meetings. We gathered the children and the youth and had them singing labor songs. Literature was everywhere.

Outside help was freely given by men like Fred Dixon, J. S. Woodsworth and William Bailey. The workers were united. The result was a victory for labor.

My majority was over 600 votes. The whole city was electrified on election night. Confident of victory, the premier came to Brandon to celebrate. He was greatly annoyed. Our committee rooms were small. The crowd assembled on the streets in thousands. I mounted a chair and spoke to them. There was a wild outburst. I suggested we all chip in and hire the band. This was done. We had a victory parade such as is seldom witnessed.

The opening of the Sixteenth Legislature of Manitoba took place in February 1921. The Norris administration controlled 21 seats out of 55. The Independent Farmers had 16 seats, the

old-line Conservatives had 8 and the Labor group had 10 seats.

The Labor group was composed of the following: F. J. }
Dixon, agent, leader; W. D. Bailey, teacher; A. E. Moore, vet- }
eran; Albert Tanner, farmer; Geo. H. Palmer, telegraph opera- }
tor; M. J. Stanbridge, farmer; Wm. Ivens, editor; John Queen, }
trade unionist; Geo. Armstrong, carpenter; A. E. Smith, minis- }
ter. Three of our group were university men. None of us had }
any experience in conducting organized political activity. }
There was not a Marxist student or thinker among us. We were }
confronted with a peculiar opportunity in a critical period, but }
we could only grope about to try to find the way. We were }
honest and zealous but we failed. This great chance passed us }
by. Looking back now, it seems pitiful. }

Several thousands gathered about the buildings on the day of the opening, showing the keen interest of the people in the new line-up of forces. Only a few hundred could gain admission to the galleries of the House from which to gaze upon the antics of their servants below.

Sir James Aikens, an ex-corporation counsel, Lieutenant-Governor of the Province, read the Speech from the Throne to us.

The Winnipeg strike had been smashed by force and violence. It had ended June 26, 1919. Some of our comrades were still in jail. Unemployment was abroad. This legislature was filled with the evidence of the indignant protest of the long-suffering people. But the government came down with a Speech from the Throne that had in it not one word that would show any sense of these conditions. The government was deaf and blind.

Our group made serious efforts to combat this situation. We took up the questions of unemployment, housing, returned men. We advised the government we would give support to

} any legislation dealing effectively with these matters. An appropriation of \$500,000 was made for housing. We commended their Child Welfare Act and voted for it. We submitted resolutions on collective bargaining, housing, taxation, nationalization of railroads (under the debate on fixing freight rates). We proposed the enactment of direct legislation and the single transferable vote.

} I moved a resolution calling for "group government" with the cabinet to be composed on the basis of proportional representation from all parties. This was the only feeble effort made to find some way of ousting the minority government. It was typical of the muddled thinking of that time. This motion was defeated by the casting vote of the speaker after three weeks' debate.

The Duke of Devonshire paid a visit to Manitoba at this time. We raised objections to furnishing a banquet for him. "It is," we said, "no time for banquets when there are so many citizens who, day after day, do not have sufficient food." Sir James was wroth with me. I refused to attend the function, although repeatedly urged to do so. I told him I did not belong.

As I look back, it is not hard to appraise the problems of that period of change in the early twenties. The death of Laurier in 1919 was symbolic of the end of the old era. Monopoly large-scale capitalism was arriving. Labor was stirring in its new strength. The heavy ground-swell carried me with other ministers and professional men into the lead of the workers' movement. Unconsciously, we headed the movement on lines indicated by our own backgrounds. While championing the justice of the cause, many of these new converts mistakenly considered that the workers were ill-advised in striking, parading or demonstrating. They felt called upon to give "sane" advice to the workers, in whom they lacked confidence. I was

groping my way to a more positive understanding. My leadership suffered from great shortcomings.

I remember well how the great western farmers' "revolt" of that time was led back safely into the Liberal fold. T. A. Crerar, who had been in the Borden Unionist cabinet, headed the Progressive Party. Farmers' governments were elected in all three prairie provinces. In Manitoba, John Bracken, who was not even a member of the United Farmers, was taken from the Agricultural College to head the Farmers' Government in 1922. He ended up as the national leader of the Conservative party. In Ontario the Drury Farmer Government came into office in 1919. The old two-party system was in a real crisis. Robert Forke succeeded Crerar as national leader of the Progressive Party. I had long talks with him at our home. By 1926 he was back speaking on the same platform as the new Liberal leader, Mackenzie King. Soon he was in the senate. There was no mystery about this kind of politics.

The defeat of the Winnipeg strike brought confusion to labor's ranks. R. B. Russell had been the most militant leader of the movement. He championed the "One Big Union." The secession from the A. F. of L. unions reached mass proportions in 1919 and 1920. I believe somewhere in the neighborhood of 100,000 workers once held O.B.U. cards — as well as their A. F. of L. union cards. I knew Bob Russell and other leaders in the O.B.U. George Craig and Alf Hanwell were the center of the O.B.U. group in Brandon, occupying an old building opposite the Y.M.C.A. where the "Citizens Committee" used to meet. Joe Knight, Charles Lester, Frank Cassidy and others of the O.B.U. came through Brandon and spoke at the People's Church. The *O.B.U. Bulletin* was a powerful labor paper at first, but later deteriorated into a weather-guessing business. So attractive were their prizes that the circulation at one time reached a million copies per week.

In labor's left wing, there were O.B.U. syndicalists, old Socialist party groups and the beginnings of the Communist party. I followed somewhat remotely the violent debate in the Socialist party over Lenin's Twenty-One Points, the basis for admission to the new Communist International. The Socialist party was split. The old *Western Clarion* raged. The Communist group in Brandon was formed in those early days around Gavin Broadhurst and Douglas Mitchell. They often came to the People's Church and put forward their ideas during the question and discussion period.

My debate in the City Hall with H. M. Bartholomew reflected the confusion of the times. I think the subject was something like: Direct Action versus Parliamentary Action. "Bart" was a gaunt, humorous Irishman, a powerful figure. He represented the Communist viewpoint. The same confused debate was repeated wherever workers met: Evolution versus Revolution. I was with the right wing at that time. I had moved away from the concept of a reformed labor or people's church as the "means" for the achievement of the new social order. I saw now the necessity for a labor party.

In 1921 the *B.C. Federationist* in Vancouver printed Lenin's *Left-Wing Communism — An Infantile Disorder* in serial and pamphlet form and was suppressed as a result. The editor, A. S. Wells, was arrested but labor protests forced the dropping of the charge. I think one or two worn, battered copies came to Brandon.

I attended the historic Trades and Labor Congress convention in Winnipeg in August 1921. I think Tim Buck was there, but I did not meet him at that time. Tom Moore and the conservative element made much of the defeat of the general strike. They sought to prove that the sympathetic or general strike was not a proper weapon for the labor movement to use in dealing with the employers. They labelled it as "revolution-

ary tactics," a popular epithet in those days — and quite correct. It was at this convention that the Canadian Labor Party was formed. It was regarded at that time as the sane alternative to "revolutionary tactics," although even it was too left for the conservative group.

Our conference to organize the Canadian Labor Party met on Wednesday evening, August 24, 1921. Harry Kerwin was in the chair and Jimmy Simpson was provisional secretary. Every province but Prince Edward Island was represented. Jimmy Watters from Glace Bay moved and I seconded the motion that "we constitute ourselves a convention of the Canadian Labor Party and elect a committee to draft a program." At this conference, after a span of almost twenty years, I again met Arthur Puttee, our first labor member of parliament, from away back in 1902.

I have treasured a copy of the proceedings of this historic conference. The platform proclaimed the aim of a "complete change in our present economic and social system. In this we recognize our solidarity with the workers the world over." Then came the following planks:

1. Unemployment — state insurance against unemployment, chargeable to industry.
2. Public ownership and democratic control of public utilities.
3. Electoral reform — proportional representation, names instead of election deposits. Extension of the voting facilities.
4. Old age pensions and health disability insurance.
5. Abolition of non-elective legislative bodies.
6. International disarmament.
7. Direct legislation — initiative, referendum, recall.
8. Enactment of recommendations of the Washington Labor Conference, especially the eight-hour day.
9. Repeal of amendment to Immigration Act providing for deportation of British subjects.
10. Removal of taxation on necessities of life, taxation of land values and abolition of fiscal legislation that leads to class privileges.
11. Nationalization of the banking system.
12. Capital levy for reduction of the war debt.

We heard reports on the state of organization of labor parties across the country. In Edmonton, as in Manitoba, there were the Independent Labor Party and the Dominion Labor Party. In Moose Jaw, there was the Labor Representation League. In Regina, the Federated Labor Party. In British Columbia, represented at our conference by J. S. Woodsworth, there were the Federated Labor Party and the Socialist Party. In Ontario, the Independent Labor Party was the individual membership party and the Canadian Labor Party was the federated party, largely based on A. F. of L. unions. In Quebec, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick there were small labor parties. It was decided to elect a federal executive committee with officers and one representative from each province who was to convene a provincial convention as soon as possible.

The new President, John Bruce of the Plumbers Union, and the Secretary-Treasurer, Jimmy Simpson, both of Toronto, were directed to confer with Crerar and the Farmers' Progressive Party to "reach a working agreement." We envisaged the emergence of a great nation-wide Labor party based on the unions. We believed this new party, combined with the Farmers party, would become the government at Ottawa in a relatively short time. We soon learned that the Tom Moores and Crerars had other plans. In the federal election of December 6, 1921, only three labor candidates were elected. Sixty-five seats went to the Farmers' Progressive Party. The Liberals had only 117 seats but Mackenzie King continued in office under a back-door arrangement with the farm leaders.

The following summer the Liberals and Tories in Brandon united in the provincial elections under the banner of "fusion." I was defeated. ³²³

CHAPTER SEVEN

I Find Brotherhood

I WENT TO THE great West in 1890. I returned to the great East in 1923. I went out as one man. I returned as the head of a family. On August 6, 1923, our Smith family arrived in Toronto at the old Union Station. There were eight of us — five children and three adults, my sister Alvina, my wife and myself. David was the youngest member of our family. He was four years of age. Our Jean was a golden-haired girl in those days. I used to call her "Glory Jean." Our next son was Arthur Eben who was about ten years old. He died in 1929 in his sixteenth year. Stewart came to Toronto at that time along with us. He attended Humberside Collegiate and later went to work in a factory. Our daughter Cora took her course in chiropractic and later registered in the hospital in Danbury, Connecticut, and became a trained nurse. Mercy was married and living in Moose Jaw. Douglas, our eldest son, was employed in the Bank of Commerce at Humboldt, Saskatchewan.

The proposal that I should leave Brandon and move to the East was not mine originally. It was suggested to me by friends, some of whom were labor M.P.'s. The whole matter was fully discussed with all concerned. Many Brandon friends did not favor the proposal. I favored the move because I had a desire to enter, if possible, a larger field. I felt an urge to make the

change. I had no agreements or promises from anyone. It was quite remarkable how the course of life developed.

I arrived in Toronto in the midst of turbulent changes. It was five years since the end of the war, all the lessons of which seemed to have been forgotten. The people of Ontario had returned a Tory regime to office under the leadership of Mr. Howard Ferguson. The poorly organized farmers, who had been in the ascendancy under Drury, were relegated to the background. The Tories unearthed some frauds in the treasury of the province and blamed them on the Farmers. This was a means of discrediting third-party movements. The labor movement, which had some ten members in the legislature while Drury was Premier, was reduced to one seat. Politically, labor was demoralized. The one labor member was John Callan of Rainy River. I had campaigned for many days on his behalf during the election. He defeated Mathieu, the big lumber baron of the Fort Frances region.

For sixteen months after our arrival in Toronto, I was occupied with two main tasks, the People's Church and the Labor Forum. Milton Burt was Secretary-Treasurer of the People's Church. The committee that had been set up in April included Jimmy Simpson, Mrs. A. E. Loeb, Andrew Glen and S. J. McMaster, who was later President of the Toronto and District Trades and Labor Council and labor nominee on the Toronto Transportation Commission.

We secured the use of the old Spadina Hall at 450 Spadina Avenue. It would accommodate about 700 people in a public meeting. Here, for two months, I conducted our People's Church. Study classes were conducted for adults and juniors on Sunday mornings, and a public meeting was held at night in the manner of a forum. We used singing and the reading of good literature in our form of meeting. We enrolled about fifty

children in our classes. The history class for adults was conducted by myself and had a membership of forty.

In the early fall of 1923, the Forum Committee at the Labor Temple invited our committee to merge activities. It was arranged that my committee should become the executive of the forum and I would take the leadership in the work under the auspices of the Toronto branch of the Canadian Labor Party. This was done. The work of the forum developed rapidly. The public meetings in the Labor Temple on Sunday evenings during that fall and all that winter were attended by overflow crowds. There was a great variety of speakers. A musical program was staged at intervals. During the week nearly every evening was occupied with classes in which the enrolment reached over 300 students, old and young. Classes were conducted in economics, sociology, political geography, English, public speaking and other subjects.

Communism versus Social-Reformism was the central issue of debate in the forum and in the Labor Representation Political Association, which was the local federated body of the Canadian Labor Party. For the first time I heard Communist speakers putting forward the full Communist position. The question and discussion periods at the forum called forth the sharpest verbal debates. Jimmy Simpson, a centrist, took a united-front position at that time. He and I defended the British Labor government, but advocated an all-inclusive united front in the Canadian Labor Party, including the Communist party. Tim Buck, Jack MacDonald and other Communist speakers were given the platform at the forum. My son Stewart was the speaker at one forum. His subject was the history of labor. He attacked the Second International and spoke for Marxism and the Communist International.

During this period I became widely acquainted in labor circles with the trade union officials. The smug self-seeking of

the right-wing labor officials quickly proved to me their unfitness and unworthiness to lead. In outlook and spirit they seemed to me to be part of the old order. All my experience was pushing me to the left. I worked actively in the strike of the typographical workers during the winter. I was elected a delegate to the Hamilton convention of the C.L.P. which met on March 22, 1924.

The death of Lenin that winter was marked by a great meeting. Jimmy Simpson, Jimmy Connor and myself represented the Labor party and Jack MacDonald, Bill Moriarty and Leslie Morris spoke for the Communist party. All sections of labor joined in mourning the loss of this great international leader. I was studying his great books.

On May 1, 1924, I spoke at the Queen's Park demonstration and the Labor Temple mass meeting. In fact, as educational director of the Canadian Labor Party, I had been instrumental in organizing these affairs. This was the first united-front May Day. Jack Young, President of the Trades and Labor Council, was chairman. Bill Irvine, M.P., was guest speaker. On the same platform was Florence Custance, well-known Communist women's leader who was Secretary of the International Workers Relief. This was a big event in those days.

In addition to the work of the forum, I remember the classes in world history which I organized at Birch Cliff for Sunday mornings during this same period. Harry Kerwin was there. In earlier days he had been with the Socialist Party of North America. I had met him at the founding convention of the C.L.P. in Winnipeg.

In the summer I organized the Forum Summer School. I worked hard to make it a success. There were upwards of a hundred students registered to take the study-recreation courses. There were also numerous children and young people on the campus. The mornings were given to study. The after-

noons were free for sports and relaxation, as was desired. The location, Birch Cliff Heights, was favorable for a good outing and, while it lasted, everyone had a good time.

For the first three weeks everything went along pleasantly. The attendance filled the large tent. Then arose differences of opinion. I had invited several of the Communist leaders to take part. I did this because, in my opinion, they were the best qualified persons we could get to handle some of the subjects with which we wished to deal. This became a matter of dispute. The school was brought to a hurried conclusion at the end of the fourth week. In the month of November I resigned from the forum committee. Some members of the executive committee felt that I was too much disposed to bring Communist teachings into my lectures and my working arrangements. They alleged that I was trying to make "Communists" out of them. The fact that my son Stewart had become National Secretary of the Young Communist League was raised by them.

While still in the church I had come to see that the transfer of industrial production from the basis of profit and self-interest to the basis of service and use was the essential step to human Brotherhood. In the general strike I learned that this would not be accomplished by a great captain and a band of angels but by the party of the workers. I had the conception of a gradual achievement of reform after reform, step after step, until the new social order would emerge. I stood for evolution against revolution.

Now experience and study were teaching me that revolution was part of evolution, a most important part. The Russian Revolution was victorious. The Soviet government which it was at first predicted would not last very long, was now firmly established. Elsewhere the social-democratic parties of labor had produced retreat and defeat. In Italy fascism had come to power. The Labor government in England had been a great disap-

pointment to me. In the strikes and in the clash of opinion in the Canadian Labor Party and in my own committee, I was drawing near to the conclusion that the Communist position was often what was needed.

Communism challenged my mind and spirit. There was no finality. There was no last word. There was no last man and no chosen race on the earth. The first and last loyalty was to humanity. It asserted and revealed man's individual worth. It was the basic truth of personal initiative. Outside of Communist society, it seemed to me, there could never be realized the full development of man's superior qualities of character.

The Communist in his daily life can not live quite like another. The discipline of the party will not condone slackness or self-seeking. The man with a mission on this earth cannot run down any old lane, cannot chase butterflies over every meadow for his own pleasure. To the common experience of all the working class which he shares he brings the moral conviction and firm purpose of helping human society to rise to a higher level of life, abolishing the evil of exploitation of man by man. In such a social system no man can be mechanically degraded. He has the enduring incentive to live in a noble manner.

"We call ourselves Communists," said Lenin. "What is a Communist? The word 'communist' is a Latin word derived from the word 'common.' Communism means working in common." (October 2, 1920.)

My caravan was now at another of those points where the road divides. The Sociological Fellowship of Canada had been formed, sponsored by the Rev. T. Moore, Rev. Ben Spence, James Simpson and others. It was proposed that I should conduct a special lecture series on social topics in various churches across the country. Many of my former associates invited me

to return to the "old church." I must decide. I had no difficulty in making the choice.

In January 1925 Maude and I applied to be received as members of the Communist Party of Canada. Our applications were honored by a favorable decision and we, along with many others, were duly given a reception into the party. That took place, not in a magnificent, high-ceilinged temple dedicated to unreality, but in a small room upstairs at 8 Gerrard Street East, where the meeting of the party was held.

It was not a hurried decision. It was based upon firm and deep and studied conviction that in communism we had found the basic movement which would steadily grow into the agency by which the workers would achieve the release of mankind from economic and political bondage, from ignorance and disease — the broad movement which would eventually bring forth the true nature and spirit of man in a classless society of firm, conscious Brotherhood over all the earth.

CHAPTER EIGHT

"Why Do You Believe in Revolution?"

THE YEAR 1925 was one long to be remembered. The dark threat of unemployment confronted the workers from the beginning of the new year. It boded ill for thousands of men and women — young and old — married and single.

The Toronto Unemployed Association was established, centering in the Labor Temple on Church Street. I became the president of this body, and there were between three and four thousand enrolled as members. These figures were but a small proportion of the total out of work, which would easily have been 20,000.

Every Wednesday morning the weekly meeting of the association was held. Fully a thousand men would be jammed into the assembly hall. We appeared before the mayor and board of control every week to submit complaints, cases of eviction, sickness and other emergencies and to plead for help to feed men and families. His Worship, the late Mayor Foster, was in the chair at the City Hall. He was an old man. I thought he had a sense of the terrible plight of the man out of work whose children were crying for food. Later, on a site up Yonge Street, he built an exact model of the Taj Mahal in India to serve as his burial place. It cost \$250,000.

There were 3600 young men out of work in Toronto. Mayor Foster turned to me one day and asked: "Mr. Smith, what is

it, do you think, makes all these young men flock to Toronto when they are out of work?"

"In my opinion, Mr. Mayor," I replied, "these young men come to Toronto following up the wealth they have produced which has also come to Toronto." Toronto reeked with self-righteousness and the theology of selfishness and greed.

One result of our activities was the decision of the board of control to send a delegation to Ottawa to request \$100,000 to aid in providing for the unemployed. Mayor Foster headed the delegation which consisted of eight persons.

I was one of the eight, representing the unemployed. I remember the interview with Premier King and his cabinet. Hon. E. J. McMurray of Winnipeg was one of the Ministers of the Crown who sat in at the discussion. It was the first time such a delegation from a municipality had confronted the Dominion government with the problem of aiding the unemployed. Mr. King quoted the British North America Act, claiming that his government was absolved of any responsibility.

Our association and its activities were of great concern to the police commission. We could not parade. We could not demonstrate. We could not make collections on the streets. The proprietors of all public halls were warned not to allow us the use of any of their buildings. One day I suggested that we try to get a church in which to hold a mass meeting of all unemployed. I was authorized to try out the proposal. I canvassed a large number. I appealed to the ministers. Among Toronto's hundreds of churches, none was available.

Unemployment was a post-war condition. The great war had been won and the peace had been lost. The war of intervention against the Soviet Union had proved disastrous for the invaders. The last of them (Japan) trailed away like a whipped cur in 1922. The Treaty of Versailles was in operation. The glowing promises made to the soldiers of "a land fit for heroes

to dwell in" had been forgotten. Goods were accumulating in the warehouses. The people could not buy them. The League of Nations was busy calculating the dimensions of the disaster now pending. Fifty million workers were unemployed in the capitalist world, starving in the midst of plenty. The Soviet Union was the only country where the curse of unemployment was being abolished.

While engaged in the unemployed struggle, I attended the second annual convention of the Ontario section of the Canadian Labor Party on April 11 - 12. It was held in Toronto at the Church Street Labor Temple.

I can recall few conventions or meetings as stormy as this one. Inspired by the increasing fury of reaction evident on every hand at that time, the right wing launched an attack from the moment the convention opened. The main debate took place on their resolution denouncing an alleged lack of "political freedom in the Soviet Union." It was a favorite trick of reactionaries to seize on the fact that a workers' revolution must use extraordinary means to protect itself from the endless attempts of capitalism to organize counter-revolution. Adoption of the resolution meant, in effect, condemning the Russian Revolution. Mr. A. Kirzhner and Mr. Reinwine led the right-wing forces in this debate. At one point, the right wing demanded that the police be called.

The resolution was defeated amidst cheers. When the time came for the election of officers, my name was placed in nomination for president along with that of Harry Kerwin. On the narrow margin of two votes I was elected president, which was quite unexpected, as it was well known that I had just recently become a member of the Communist party. In my speech of acceptance I stressed as the main feature the need for strengthening the unity of the Labor party "so that full support will be given to every candidate nominated in the coming fed-

eral election." Jimmy Simpson was re-elected Secretary-Treasurer by acclamation. My election as a known Communist provoked considerable comment in the press. I gave a number of interviews.

"Why do you, a former Methodist minister, believe in revolution, Mr. Smith?" I was asked by one reporter.

"We take the position that some day the egg will ripen," I replied, "and when the chick comes out it will, of necessity, break the shell."

* * *

I remember the days of the big strike in the Nova Scotia coal fields in 1925, when the British Empire Steel Corporation had control. This company resolved to join the general conspiracy of the capitalist class against the wage scales and living standards of the workers. They ordered a wage-cut and a short work-week, and when the union objected, they closed down the mines. The credit of the men at the company stores was cut off. The company was determined to starve them into submission. I visited the mining camps of Cape Breton and held meetings in Glace Bay and Reserve and Dominion and a number of other places. I saw the conditions. I met the miners and their great leader, Jimmy MacLachlan. They were not willing to accept a four-day work week. They decided to strike.

On June 11, 1925, the call to strike went forth over the area of District 26 of the United Mine Workers of America. Immediately all work stopped. Momentous events began to develop.

It was about four o'clock in the morning at the Waterford power station. The strike had continued for several days. A large number of pickets were in charge at the power house. Suddenly there appeared a company of police, mounted on horses. Behind came numerous other armed men on foot. They carried machine guns and small arms. They attacked the power

house. They took full possession and arrested thirty-two of the pickets.

The alarm about the Battle of the Power House spread rapidly. The men began to rally. About mid-morning, the miners marched, seven hundred strong. They were unarmed. They had come to demand release of the arrested pickets. On somebody's orders the mounted men charged with fury upon the crowd and, without warning of any kind, opened fire into the mass. They shot James Davies dead on his feet. Gilbert Watson was shot through the stomach and had to be hurried to the hospital to save his life. Then the ammunition of the police gave out. They had no more bullets. The veteran miners had learned how to fight on the battlefields of France. They were heroes then. Now they were compelled to fight for their bread or sit and see their families suffer hunger and degradation. It was infuriating. They tore the riders from their horses and slammed them onto the ground.

They drove the BESCO battlers from the field. Many of the latter fled into the woods. Some of them crashed the town jail to find protection from the enraged people.

Then came the most serious change in the character of the Nova Scotia coal strike. The company called on the Ottawa government to provide military protection for their property and to assist them in driving into submission the men who labored to produce the coal. This made the strike a full-fledged political struggle.

It cost the government \$325,000 to ship troops into the strike area and maintain them there until the strike was defeated.

In July I went West speaking at mass meetings in support of the miners. At Saskatoon 1500 people attended a mass protest meeting in Victoria Park, demanding the withdrawal of troops and the granting of federal relief to the starving miners and their families.

While there I attended the convention of the Farmers' Political Association of Saskatchewan. My purpose was to get established a new farmer-labor party. But the convention was not ready for this step. I served on their committee to revise the constitution with G. H. Williams of Semans, A. E. Bolton of Kelliher and others. Our revision allowed affiliation from labor groups. This association was later diverted to serve as the basis of the C.C.F.

On July 19 I spoke in Calgary at the Labor Forum in the Variety Theater. By this time the strike of the Drumheller miners was going on and, in fact, had reached a very critical point. I linked the struggle of the Nova Scotia miners and the Alberta miners together in my appeal for a strong protest to the government and for financial aid.

The Drumheller strike continued until late in September. There were over 2000 miners and their families involved. I spoke at a large strike meeting in the city of Drumheller.

The cause of this strike was the decision of the operators to impose a cut in wage scales of some twenty-two per cent. The hostility of the men was greatly heightened by the action of the union officials of the district in accepting this proposition without, in any way, consulting the members.

The miners refused to accept the wage cut. They repudiated their officials and they downed tools and walked out on strike. The strike was outlawed by John L. Lewis and the head office of the union. The men were ordered back to work by the international officials. Any local whose members refused to obey would lose its charter.

Numerous police were sent into Drumheller. They practised ugly methods of intimidation. Scabs were imported, some even coming from the Old Country. Many of these, to their credit, never entered the mines to dig coal.

One night without any warning the police took a shot at one

of the pickets in the glow of the bonfire they had lit to keep warm. Louis Renners fell, shot in the back. He was arrested and handcuffed despite the fact that he was severely wounded. Later he was charged under the Criminal Code with "watching and besetting" and was sentenced. It has remained a secret until now, so far as I know, that the man standing beside Louis that night by the fire on the hills of Drumheller was Tim Buck. The police had hoped that Tim was the man who dropped to earth at the crack of their rifle shot.

The end came in September. The fury of the police was mounting. They were carrying arms daily to intimidate the miners. Open attacks were made and every provocation was employed to drive the strikers to violence. The police shot a striker on the picket line. Then began mass arrests. Over a hundred were arrested, including seven women. The list of charges included "watching and besetting" (which is another term for picketing), "unlawful assembly" and "assault." Ninety cases were sent up for trial.

The desperation which seemed to be overtaking the arrested miners was indicated by one sentence from a letter I received: "Our trials start October 1. There is no money for defense and it looks as though we will have to take our chances without a lawyer."

I remember well the historic conference called to aid the defense of the Drumheller miners and provide a permanent labor defense organization. Jack Young, President of the Toronto District Trades and Labor Council, was the chairman. Jimmy Simpson and Sam Lawrence, now Mayor of Hamilton, were members. Jack Counsel, K.C., of Hamilton, was there. Mrs. Florence Custance, Annie Buller and Malcolm Bruce along with Bob Shoesmith and myself were also members at that meeting. We established the Canadian Labor Defense League.

We resolved to defend the arrested miners who were about to be put on trial in the courts at Calgary. For over fifteen years thereafter the C.L.D.L. held itself to the vital undertaking of providing defense and material help to any Canadian worker arrested for activity in the labor movement. Funds were immediately collected and despatched to the miners. Nine strikers were given hard sentences ranging from one year up to three years.

Over 300 miners were blacklisted by the operators following the strike. They were compelled to leave the district. When the father of the lad who was shot in the back by the police went to work, he and his other son were dismissed because of their relation to the wounded man who, himself, would never work again. We raised and sent over \$4000 to help the valiant miners.

Everywhere the workers were beginning to realize the meaning and need of the defense movement. In the next decade we defended over 10,000 workers charged with offenses through their labor activities. Our fight against the persecution of the workers and in defense of civil rights in Canada was joined to the world-wide struggle against the growing menace of fascism.

I had no sooner returned from the West than a federal election was announced for October 29. I was the Labor party candidate in Port Arthur. In the election Mackenzie King's forces were reduced from 117 to 101 in the House of Commons. He and seven of his ministers were defeated. The Conservatives had 116 seats. But the Progressive party and the three labor members made a total of twenty-eight seats. This enabled the third-party groups to exercise the "balance of power" in the Canadian House of Commons. It was a changing world.

Reflecting upon those bygone days, I recall with esteem and admiration many of the old comrades who took up the struggle

with courage and faith. There was very little to inspire them in the immediate picture. They had vision to behold the future and they believed that out of their efforts there would arise better days. Harry Bryan was my agent in Thunder Bay riding. He travelled about with me over that immense area. He knew many of the old people. He would make speeches on "Who Is Smith?" Alex Gibson, now an alderman, was one of our speakers in those days. A. Lougheed was a staunch friend. He was a civil engineer, one of those who built the C.P.R. Bill Checkley was one of my leading workers.

We had campaigned for a federal scheme of old age pensions as the main focus of our election fight. All labor candidates across the country had done likewise. It was a concerted move. When parliament convened early in 1926, King brought in an old age pension bill. It was vetoed by the Tory senate.

Then the Tories found the customs scandal. It had been lying around the House covered with cobwebs for a long time. There was much truth in it, soiling the "white robes" of both "the great historic parties." Bootleggers and smugglers had direct influence high up in government circles.

Every federal government during my lifetime has been publicly proved guilty of corruption and graft. There has never been an honest administration, even in the limited sense of refraining from larceny. Laurier's Government was involved in the works department graft scandal. Borden's was up to its neck in war contract scandals. Now Mr. King's regime was proved corrupt. No capitalist government can be free of corruption.

But the fates were not prepared to desert Mr. King. Anticipating the disaster, he decided to go to the people with his troubles. He advised the Governor-General, Lord Byng, to dissolve parliament. To his surprise, Lord Byng refused to do so. Mr. King and his government then resigned and Lord Byng

very quickly called on Arthur Meighen to assume office and set up a government. This he did.

The going was impossible for Mr. Meighen. In three days, he tendered Lord Byng the same advice as Mr. King, that the House be dissolved. This time His Lordship agreed and the Meighen Government went to the country, choosing the tariff issue as the problem on which the people should declare judgment. Mr. King rang the changes on the issue of the "constitution," charging that the governor-general had overstepped his powers as the king's representative. This naturally brought him wide popular support. In addition, he was helped by the fact that the people remembered the 1919 record of Arthur Meighen, which frightened the voters into supporting the Liberals. Mr. King was returned with a larger group (119 seats) and Robert Forke, the Pipestone farmer from Manitoba, joined the King cabinet. This was the end of the Progressive party. But the old age pension law was passed. It was a victory for our campaign.

In September 1926 I returned home from my second campaign in Port Arthur. As I remember it, I received some 1400 votes. In the next month we were confronted with a provincial election called by the Ferguson Government. The Labor party convention in Hamilton Center tendered me the nomination. Sam Lawrence was the chairman of the nominating meeting.

The third annual convention of the Canadian Labor Party (Ontario section) held that year in London, was the largest ever assembled. There were 220 delegates registered. Seventy-five of them were trade union delegates. The secretary reported thirty new affiliations. The Communist party was represented together with the union locals, Labor party branches, workers' fraternal organizations, Women's Labor League branches and labor councils. It was a promising united front of labor. But,

as events proved, it was the last convention of the Labor party in Ontario at which the principle of unity prevailed.

Anti-Communist propaganda, fostered in A. F. of L. circles in the U.S.A. and in British Labor Party circles in England, had found spokesmen in Canada. The C.L.P. of Quebec had held its convention only a short time before. Under the leadership of J. Corbett, an official of the Brotherhood of Railway Carmen, the Communists were expelled from the Quebec party. There has been no Labor party there since that date.

Under the same leadership, the plot was laid to disrupt the Ontario convention. The exclusionists excluded themselves. The motion to exclude the Communists was defeated by a large majority.

The composition of the executive committee elected by the convention illustrates fully the principle of unity: A. Barnetson of the electrical workers, Mrs. Florence Custance, L. R. Menzies of London, delegate from the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway Employees, L. Soltz, furriers union, J. W. Alquist, the grand old man who headed the Finnish Organization, Alderman Sam Lawrence of the Hamilton stonemasons union, Mrs. J. Inman of the Hamilton Women's Labor League, and John Loane of the Toronto Trades Council and one other trade union delegate. The officers were: A. E. Smith, president, James Muldowney, vice-president, James Simpson, secretary-treasurer. There were five Communists out of thirteen on the executive. These are the names of the men and women who stood out in the fight for unity in those days.

A distinguishing feature of that convention was the visit of Dr. Scott Nearing of New York. He was at one time professor of sociology in the University of Pittsburgh. He told me the story of how he came to be discharged. The celebrated evangelist, Rev. William Sunday, came to Pittsburgh to conduct one of his famous religious revivals. "Billie" Sunday preached night

after night in the tabernacle to huge crowds of people. Hundreds of men and women were professing to be "saved." On the platform at the meetings were seated, very often, some of the millionaires of the steel city.

Many of these rich men derived a considerable part of their incomes from the rent for tenements in the slum areas. Nearing addressed a letter to the evangelist Sunday on behalf of the dwellers in the slum properties. He appealed to Sunday to employ his eloquence, just for one night, to expose the frightful conditions of those slums. The letter was never answered. The appeal was never heard. But Scott Nearing was fired from the university.

CHAPTER NINE

Struggle Was My Teacher

THE PERIOD FROM 1925 to 1929 was one of sharp class conflict all over Canada. It was a period of reaction. It was also a period of achievement for the Canadian working class. Out of the fierce struggles, in which we were often defeated, there arose a new understanding of the meaning of organization for labor.

In 1926 I made another tour over the West to conduct local conferences of the Canadian Labor Defense League with a view to organizing districts. In all of these districts committees were elected and in many of them full-time officials were installed in office. In a comparatively short time most of the districts were able to handle their own cases as they arose. In all high political cases the national office took a direct part.

The league was an educational force in the working-class movement. It brought to the workers opportunity for enlightenment. It gave the chance for assembly and discussion. It formed a basis for gaining valuable experience. The whole political understanding of the workers was assisted in its reach for a higher plane.

Hundreds were arrested in the class struggle in this time. They were handcuffed and thrown into prison. They were tormented and starved. They were hailed before frowning court officials and scolded and bullied. They were sentenced

to jail for months and years. The smug bourgeois mentality was satisfied and proceeded to forget.

But history never forgets. It had chosen these many thousands of Canadian workers for the struggles of these years. They were the men who broke with the past and who courageously forced open the road to the new future. In the school of toil and suffering, history prepared them for the high role their class must perform, as the struggle deepens, to remove the system of capitalism, bag and baggage, from human society.

Our Defense League held its first convention in Toronto in the fall of 1927. It reflected the alarming trends which had become manifest on the world stage. Fascism had now held power for five years in Italy. Violence and murder, torture and strangulation had become the law. It was becoming fashionable for Liberal and Tory politicians to express praise of Mussolini. It was now becoming clear that fascism was the terrorist rule of Big Business. It was showing its head everywhere.

The general strike in Britain had been betrayed and crushed. Following that, the nation-wide strike of the coal miners was dealt with in a ruthless manner by the Baldwin-MacDonald Government.

In the United States, Sacco and Vanzetti were facing execution. They had been foully "framed." We were conducting a world campaign for their release. For over six years they had been in custody. A sensational confession to the crime on which these men were charged was made by one Medeiros, a convict who was a member of the gang that actually committed the Braintree robbery. Thirty-one eye-witnesses testified positively that not one of the men they saw in the murder car was Vanzetti. Thirteen witnesses testified that Vanzetti was in Plymouth selling fish on the day of the murder. A spy was placed in the cell next to Sacco to try to involve him in a plot to blow up the prison with dynamite. By tricks of testimony, Captain Proc-

tor, head of the state police, in the depths of shame withheld evidence which he was compelled to divulge after the men were dead, evidence which showed that the fatal bullet was not fired from Sacco's pistol.

Sacco said to Judge Thayer: "I know the sentence will be between two classes, the oppressed class and the rich class . . . that is why I am here today on this bench, for having been of the oppressed class. Well, you are the oppressor. You know it, Judge Thayer — you know all my life, you know why I have been here, and after seven years that you have persecuted me and my poor wife, and you still, today, sentence us to death."

Vanzetti said: "If it had not been for these things, I might have lived out my life talking at street corners. I might have died unmarked, unknown, a failure. Now we are not a failure. This is our career and our triumph. Never in our full life could we hope to do such work for tolerance, for justice, for man's understanding of man, as now we do, by accident. Our words — our lives — our pains — nothing! The taking of our lives — lives of a good shoemaker and a poor fish-peddler —all! That last moment belongs to us — that agony is our triumph!"

These two Italian radicals, "a good shoemaker and a poor fish-peddler," represented thousands of exploited, starving workers of America under the heel of capitalism, standing in the prisoners' dock innocent of any legal offense, facing a vindictive judge who debased himself and violated every principle of honesty to wreak vengeance. I threw myself into the fight on their behalf. Hundreds of messages from Canada poured in to the judge's chambers demanding justice for the prisoners. He pronounced his sentence. Sacco and Vanzetti were electrocuted on August 22, 1927. This was legal, class murder.

In Canada, the Renners case had been argued before the supreme court under our auspices. It was chosen as the occasion by the court to make a judgment on "peaceful picketing" that

questioned its legality. Many miners in Alberta and Nova Scotia were political prisoners in jails and penitentiaries. We were carrying on campaigns for their release. Charles Sims, now the well-known Toronto alderman, chaired my mass meeting at Drumheller, where we organized a petition campaign for the release of Kid Burns and Cecil Boone. They were both freed several months before the end of their sentences.

The working class is educated by taking part in the struggle against the evil conditions imposed by the system of capitalist production. These evils all flow from the exploitation which is at the heart of capitalist production. The profits of the capitalist are made by the unpaid labor of the working class. To the capitalist the wage worker is a menial, a mere digit, and wage labor is the only possible form of labor. The capitalist makes use of every means — the school, the church, the press, the courts, the police — to suppress in the workers any sense of their power to oppose capitalism, and to foster the outlook of the slave who is "content" in his slavery.

It is out of the struggle, the class struggle, that the social change will arise. This is the great truth that the social-reformist and the middle-class humanist fail to see.

The time has arrived when we must build a new collective system of production. The very life of organized society depends upon this. It is vital to have a clear sense of this truth. I gained it and developed it in social practice.

I know how hard it is for the middle-class intellectual to learn the importance of an independent, class party of the workers. And yet how can the working class begin to establish its independence without a party that fights a continuing battle? It is the creative force among the workers, the school where the workers through experience gain self-education and self-development in the struggle to put an end to capitalist exploitation. The liberal critics of the Communist party in

their writings succeed only in proving that they have been unable to make the leap to independence in their own thinking.

I took up, to the best of my ability, active work in the leading committees of the Communist party. My understanding of the role of the party grew with experience. In 1925 I had been elected to the Toronto city committee on which I served as Toronto organizer. We carried through the reorganization of the party. The branches were placed on the basis of a given area of the city, rather than on the previous basis of various nationalities. There was a great deal of activity and enthusiasm. New strength was arising in the party.

Reaction's world-wide attack on labor found its reflection within the party itself. There were tendencies to escape, to run away. These tendencies were called "right wing." Jack MacDonald, the National Secretary at that time, wished to deny the coming of a new economic crisis. Capitalism's appearance of strength in North America overwhelmed him. He believed in the theory of American exceptionalism, i.e., that American and Canadian capitalism did not suffer from the ills of European capitalism.

I remember a mass meeting of party members which was held in the Spadina Hall, subsequent to the return of our delegates from an important congress of the Communist International in Moscow. M. Spector was the speaker of the evening. The address occupied well over an hour. It consisted of a calculated array of slanders against the Soviet Union and its leaders. The speech left everybody cold with astonishment. At its conclusion, the meeting seemed to disperse automatically. Members stood around in groups discussing the situation created by the speech in animated fashion. I remember Bob Shoesmith approaching me and asking: "What do you think of that, A. E.?"

I replied: "I cannot agree with his attitude. He should certainly be asked for a full explanation."

That was on a Sunday evening. Before the close of the next day, the same speaker had agreed to make a second address to the party in an endeavor to "explain" his first. But in the meantime his organized connections with the Trotskyists were exposed.

The fight against Trotskyism and the right wing was led by Tim Buck along with a group of younger comrades rallied around him in the fight to keep the party on the path of Marx and Lenin — a struggle in which these younger comrades with Tim became the party leadership. The political bureau deliberated for several days. An all-covering resolution was prepared declaring the full position of the party with regard to Trotskyism. Every member of the party was asked to take a stand.

A meeting of all Toronto party members, closely checked, was convened in Spadina Hall at which over 800 were present. Tim presided at the meeting. The report on behalf of the political bureau was submitted by Stewart Smith. The question period lasted for over two hours. This was followed by many hours of animated discussion. Then came the decisive act in which the members were called upon to vote for or against the resolution. There were thirteen votes against. The meeting closed at six o'clock in the morning. It was sunrise in Toronto.

The struggle against Trotskyism and MacDonald's right-wing policies dominated the district and national conventions of the party. I remember well the meetings of the Toronto district convention to which I was elected a delegate. MacDonald delivered a lengthy speech in which he made a bitter attack upon Stewart. He also attacked Maude and me. He questioned the validity of my membership in the party. He finished his speech in a towering rage.

I felt compelled to speak immediately after he sat down. I

was followed by Tim. Stewart was absent in Montreal. The convention continued the following week with every delegate in place. Having returned from Montreal, Stewart was given an opportunity to reply. He characterized MacDonald's attack upon himself as an attempt to divert attention from the main issue of his right-wing ideas to non-political, personal abuse. A prolonged discussion ensued. MacDonald withdrew his remarks and, as a matter of fact, apologized to myself and Maude for what he had said.

The struggle reached its climax at the party national convention in 1929. It was a time of high feeling and much distress of mind. Here were able working-class leaders, who had been associated for years in a great task in which they had achieved great things. Our party was in the midst of a severe struggle, leading the workers. The unity of the ranks was of vital importance. In this situation comes this evil thing to divide and destroy the party. The delegates brought out these things in their speeches. They appealed to MacDonald to clarify his mind and to associate himself with the correct line of the Communist party. I heard Tim Buck and Stewart make this appeal to MacDonald. They and the comrades associated with them in the fight for correct policies wanted MacDonald to stay with the party but they waged an uncompromising struggle against Trotskyism and right-wingism which, under Lovestone, had split the Communist party in the United States.

Trotskyism had made its appearance in the dark days of the war of intervention in the Soviet Union, when the vile imperialists of the world undertook to destroy the workers' state. Trotsky was connected with the German secret police as early as 1921. He was in the service of British agents in 1926. At one time his gang received 250,000 German gold marks for their special work of counter-revolution.

The test of one's position in the world was one's attitude to-

wards the Soviet Union, the first socialist state. The triumphant establishment of the Soviet Union constituted the great turning point in man's history. It called forth the admiration of all friends of progress in every land under the sun. It also aroused the bitterest hatred of those elements in human society who were animated solely by selfishness and insatiable greed.

Capitalist counter-revolution, dressed up by Trotsky to appeal to class-conscious workers, was deliberately brought into the Canadian Communist movement in 1928 by MacDonald and Spector and was designedly thrust upon the membership of the then youthful Communist party. It was a threat against the whole working-class movement. It called forth a bitter and long fight which had its origin years before, and from it, with high honor, our Comrade Tim Buck emerged as the leader of the party. I learned that the struggle in the party itself for the correct program and policy is an essential part of the growth and development of the working-class movement.

In my belief the election of Tim Buck to the position of leader of the Communist movement in Canada was an important event in Canadian history. The years have justified the decision then adopted. He stands forth today as the decisive working-class leader of Canada, a man whose wisdom and guidance are accepted by many thousands of class-conscious workers.

CHAPTER TEN

The Free Speech Fight

IN 1927 the workers had few halls in which to meet. Therefore they had to use the streets and parks. I remember one Saturday evening we had ten mass meetings on St. Clair Avenue in the campaign to elect Jack Young. The policeman on the beat declared he would arrest the one who "lifted" the collection. Someone shouted: "Let's all take up the collection." A dozen hats came off heads and away they went.

I took the box to continue the meeting. The cop called me down and said: "Come with me." Someone reminded him that he was to arrest all who took up the collection. "All right, come on, all of you." So away we went down the street behind the big policeman, carrying our banners for Jack Young. At midnight we were dismissed and the collection was handed over, some \$14.00.

Tim Buck, Wm. Jackson, Stewart Smith and Harvey Murphy were arrested on Dundas Street West at Pacific Avenue where large meetings were held. They were big game for the police. Remanded on bail, they were again arrested before the hearing arrived. This time they were fined \$25 each. Some months before, Stewart had returned from a sojourn in Europe. He had participated in the general strike in England, had made his way to France and Germany and had spent much time in the

Soviet Union studying the upbuilding of socialism there. His return had been a joyful event for us.

In 1926 the Communist party in Winnipeg succeeded in electing an alderman, W. N. Kolisnyk. He received 1874 first-choice votes. It was the first occasion on which a revolutionary worker had been elected to a legislative body in America on a straight Communist ticket.

If we in Toronto were to follow Winnipeg's example, it was first necessary to establish freedom of speech. We proposed to confront the authorities every day with our mass movement. They were out to suppress and destroy our organization. They stepped up their police terror daily. We resolved to fight back with all our strength and to make more effective and responsive every member, every branch and every district of the Canadian Labor Defense League.

In the face of the fierce hate and terror, it can be stated, we succeeded. The C.L.D.L. was built into one of the greatest mass movements of Canadian workers that had existed up to that time. We enrolled over 20,000 members with additional influence of over 26,000 affiliated supporters. It was demonstrated for all to see that, whenever the class struggle became severely bitter, there could be rallied tens of thousands of Canadians who would fight for their rights.

The most inspiring thing through all these years was the unfailing staunchness and militancy of the workers. I stood in law courts from Halifax to Vancouver in hundreds of cases. There was no defeatism on the part of the accused workers. No cowardice! I never saw one case where the prisoner in the dock cried for mercy from the usually bitter-minded court. We never advised anyone to plead "guilty." They were not criminals.

Mrs. Florence Custance, General Secretary of the Canadian Labor Defense League from its first inception in 1925, died on

July 12, 1929, after a lengthy illness. A very great tribute is due this noble woman, who stood forth at that time and who devoted her abilities to the Communist movement. She had been a public school teacher in England, the land of her birth. She became a student of Marx. She was an able teacher and a good public speaker. She was an efficient organizer and leader of the Communist party.

Early in 1929 I was appointed Acting General Secretary of the C.L.D.L. One of my first suggestions was that the national office should be removed from my bedroom on Runnymede Road. First we secured an office on Bloor Street, then in the summer we moved to the Stair Building at 331 Bay Street. From this center our national work was carried on for the next eleven years. It became a very well-known address.

Stormy days were ahead. The tempestuous events of that year indicated the oncoming of fierce struggles. The great Oshawa strike of the automobile workers had taken place in 1928. It was the first big battle of the auto workers. A big strike among the steel workers of the National Steel Car Company in Hamilton took the center of the stage. Some thirty-seven workers were arrested. We were called upon to provide defense and relief. It was an almost impossible task. With the help of Harvey Murphy, who was one of the strike leaders, we were able to do the work.

At that time a new chief constable was appointed in Toronto. Sir Herbert Holt, President of the Royal Bank and a leader of the financial oligarchs, had used his influence to secure the appointment for Brigadier-General Draper. This had great significance in line with the developing fascist trend. Suppressive policies were stiffened. Freedom of speech was denied. Mass meetings were raided. Organizations of the left were faced with constant threats and intimidation. A "Red Squad" of so-called specialists was appointed. Police began to disrupt meetings in

parks by riding motorcycles and rearing horses roughshod into them. They wielded batons over defenseless men, women and children. Homes were raided. Offices were searched and padlocked.

Our slogan was "Every Worker a Defender." It was decided to increase the staff and start a wide campaign for freedom of speech. Beckie Buhay was made Organization Secretary of the Defense League and I was appointed General Secretary in the fall. From then on Beckie and I were associated over the years in this work.

The board of police commissioners issued an edict proscribing all Communist meetings. This edict, sent to owners of theaters and halls, said: "You are hereby notified that if in any Communist or Bolshevik meeting held in a public hall, theater, music hall, exhibition, show or other place of public amusement, proceedings or addresses, or any of them, are carried on in a foreign language, the license of such public hall, etc., shall be immediately thereafter cancelled."

Shortly after this, the police seized an issue of *The Worker* before it left the printshop. The "reasons" given were that *The Worker* was a "propaganda organ for a foreign power," that "it advocated a change of government in Canada by revolutionary methods" and that "the material in *The Worker* was scandalous and libellous." The police had taken over the functions of parliament, the attorney-general, the judiciary, the jury. General Draper had decided to dispense with all of these.

It was Sunday morning. The telephone rang. A committee member was on the line eagerly calling to know what was to be done about a cancellation order just issued by the police against our mass meeting in the Strand Theater (now the Victory) for eight o'clock that evening. I said I would look into the matter at once. The chief was absent when I arrived at his office. When he finally arrived, he agreed to leave everything to the inspector

at No. 3 Police Station. This was a favorite stratagem of the chief to avoid having to deal man to man with us. We rushed to No. 3 Station. The inspector was ready with arguments.

"You can proceed with the meeting tonight, Mr. Smith," he said, "but don't let me hear anyone speaking in a 'foreign' tongue and don't let me see anyone taking up any collection." To this I made reply that I thought it could be arranged so that he would not "hear" any objectionable speeches, nor "see" us taking up any collection if he would absent himself from the meeting. This he agreed to do. But we were warned that it was the last time we would receive any consideration in such matters. Imagine that!

We rushed away for the theater. It was nearly time to open the doors. There were some three hundred people waiting on the street. We barely saved the meeting.

That night there were 1500 people jammed into the Strand. Jim MacLachlan, leader of the Nova Scotia miners, was the main speaker. He was an outstanding figure. He had been imprisoned for his activity in the miners' cause. He had fought the brutality of BESCO for many years. He had come all the way from Cape Breton for this meeting. He made a great speech. The crowd cheered him. Max Shur, a leading man of the party in the needle trades unions, spoke that night in a "foreign" tongue. I also spoke. We took up a collection of \$250.

The next Wednesday found me in the chief's office, accompanied by Beckie Buhay and Tim Buck. A police inspector had instructed me to be there.

When we entered the well-appointed office, the chief pretended to be busy writing. He was alone in the room. For fully a minute we stood there awaiting the courtesy of the very important official. Presently he raised his eyes from the paper to behold certain figures in the light of his room.

"Oh, good day, Mr. Smith," he exclaimed. "Did you want to see me?"

"Chief," I said, "you sent for me. I do not know what you want. The inspector told me to be here and to bring someone with me. I have come with Miss Buhay and Mr. Tim Buck." I mentioned the meeting last Sunday night.

That was the spark in the powder keg. The man was transformed. He burst into a furious rage. "Oh, yes," he shouted, "you are Communists. You are a menace to this city."

Then, turning to Tim, "Where were you born?" he demanded. The same for Beckie. The same for me. "I'll have you all behind the bars. That's where you people should be." He paused.

I thrust in with: "As I see it, chief, you are the administrator of the law. You have no right to make such threats. You are trying to intimidate us." The pow-wow was finished. He rushed to the door and flung it open.

A few days later the "Red Squad" raided the Lenin memorial meeting at the Strand Theater. They strode down the aisle to the platform and took the speaker off the stage. The curtain went down. Beckie Buhay stepped in front of the curtain and began to speak.

Suddenly a missile of some sort came sailing through the air and struck the curtain right beside the face of the speaker. A loud explosion followed. Everyone jumped. The manager of the theater ordered all the doors to be opened and shouted to the people to leave the place. This might have meant disaster. I and others jumped onto chairs and called to the people not to go but to take their seats and continue the meeting.

I ran down to see what had happened to Beckie. She was standing with her eyes blinded and in distress. As soon as I came near the fumes, I suffered in the same way. I then realized what had been done by the police. They had thrown a tear-gas

bomb at Beckie to stop her speech and to stampede the meeting into a riot. They failed. The crowd became quiet again.

Then it was that Philip Halperin did a brave and cool deed. He mounted a chair at the front of the theater and began to speak. He was not allowed to speak very long. The police rushed for him as fast as they could get through the crowd. They pulled him from the chair and took him away to the station. That was a sample of the struggle in 1929.

I spent most of the night digging up someone who would put up \$1000 bail for Philip. I remember we went away out to a street by the name of Ellerbeck to awaken a justice of the peace to make valid our bonds. When the case was called the next day in court, we had a prominent counsel who walked in, clothed in all his official robes and carrying an armful of ponderous books in whose pages were inscribed the burning words of the law.

The magistrate looked at the man in the dock and said: "Who is here to defend this man?"

The big man spoke up and stated: "I am here to defend this man."

"Do you wish to press this case?" asked the magistrate, turning to the "Red Sqad."

"No, sir," came the reply.

"The charges are withdrawn. The case is dismissed," declared the court.

Philip marched with us from the precincts of the court. They did not want a trial. But Philip Halperin, as he stood in that court, was the representative of freedom of speech, freedom of assembly and freedom of organization, three vital principles of the working-class movement. The memory of Philip is still green.

In January 1929 we had seventy-four cases in the police and county courts in Toronto. This was at the height of capitalist

prosperity, many months before the crash. Six of these were charged with distributing "seditious literature" which was a new angle of persecution. It sounded ominous. And how the bourgeoisie delighted to speak and re-speak such big words!

For attempting to organize street mass meetings, twenty-one workers were given 350 days imprisonment. One of these was our comrade Jeanne Corbin, who died in 1944 in the sanitarium in London.

A meeting was held one evening at the corner of Shuter and Yonge Streets. Tom McEwen was the main speaker. There was a large crowd. Soon the police began to find excuses for interfering. They began to move the crowd away. But this time, no one moved; we just walked around a few paces and came back again. Down came "the terror of No. 2 Police Station," a big sergeant. With him was a battalion of police. They smashed the meeting ruthlessly with their clubs and arrested Tom and other speakers.

At the station, Tom was violently thrown out of the police car. He fell on his back in the yard and was seized by the feet and dragged on his back into the station. He was placed against the wall and brutally assaulted. He was struck on the face with clenched fists. His nose was severely injured. He was bleeding profusely. His fellow prisoners worked over him to try to stop the bleeding. Finally he was taken to the hospital. One doctor remarked: "It's a wonder you are still alive after such a beating and loss of blood."

The police court gave McEwen and his colleagues fourteen days. We appealed the case. In the appeal court, the defense asked the police witness why McEwen had been taken to the hospital. His reply was that one of the prisoners had struck McEwen on the nose.

"Did you inform your senior officer that this man had been

struck on the nose by a fellow prisoner so badly that he had to be removed to the hospital?"

"No, I did not."

Here the judge intervened. "Why did you not inform your senior officer of such a serious occurrence?" he demanded. This flabbergasted the witness. He was quickly yanked out of the witness box. The case was quashed.

This was not by any means the only experience of police sadism. Muni Erlick, who died on the battlefield of World War II, was beaten unmercifully while locked in his cell. Other labor speakers tasted the same treatment. One favorite trick of the "Red Squad" was to keep stepping on the heels of a prisoner as he was being led away until all the skin was scraped off the back of his feet above the shoes.

Spadina Avenue is famous for what has been done there in the fight for freedom of speech. It is famous for the type of working people that walk there, to and fro, from the shop and factory. It is a social theater. It is, more than all else, a battlefield. It has been such in years gone by, and it is today.

I remember how the Young Communist League adopted this broad avenue as the stage on which to put on many a good street meeting. Their youthful zeal smiled at the opposition of the foe.

It is a fine evening in April. A meeting is to be held at Dundas corner. The speaker mounts the box and exclaims: "Comrades and fellow-workers." Suddenly a loud "Move on! Move on! You are too near the corner!" interrupts the eloquence of the speech. It is the police. The whole meeting moves a few paces from the corner and resumes its stance. The speaker resumes. He talks about unemployment and wage cuts. "Move on!" order the police again, "You are blocking traffic." So once more the meeting shifts its "soap box" and once more the speaker opens fire.

But the police are not finished. They come for the third time with their insistent "Move on." But this time the officer says: "You can't hold a meeting here." He orders the meeting to disperse at once. And then commences a struggle on the street that was to be repeated many dozens of times. No one disperses. The speaker stays on the box. He is dragged down and conducted to the Black Maria. Another mounts the box to speak and is dragged away. But the crowd is increasing. The waves of excitement begin to roll up and down Spadina. The audience of a hundred or so around the orator as if by magic swells until there is a crowd of over a thousand people jamming the whole street. Traffic is now stopped. Other soap boxes come into use. The crowd shouts approval. They burst the sky with cheers. They surge around and around the box. They mill about. They will not leave the place. Five speakers have been taken away. And the sixth man is picked up by the police. This one is a stranger. No one knows his name, nor where he came from. He is thrown into the wagon.

In a short time I contacted the police station. The bail was set at \$50 each for six men. "Would I come and get them out?" The required \$300 was soon collected.

We went to the station and there was fun. The stranger was in a rage at having been arrested in this fashion. On the street when told to "move on" he had informed the police: "I'm an Irishman and, bejapers, I don't move for anyone." With this the police had thrown him into the Black Maria. He was raging in the cell. "What is this place I've got into? If I iver git out of here, I'll jine the Communists," he shouted. All six were given thirty days in the Langstaff jail. There they had the job of landscaping the lawns and pathways in front of the prison. It turned out to be a work of art.

Soon came the great workers' holiday — May First. These

young revolutionists stepped out of line and refused to go to work. The governor of the jail was hastily called over.

"Are you men sick?" he asked.

"No," said they, "we are not sick, but this is the First of May and we do not work on this day."

They were put in solitary confinement on bread and water. We lodged a strong protest at once. They were brought to the Don jail. I don't know what has become of the Irishman. The others are in the forefront of the Canadian working-class movement.

* * *

In Windsor a riot broke out at a meeting held by the fascists. The fascists were unmolested. Two Communists were arrested.

In Sudbury, the center of nickel mining, the editor of the Finnish language daily newspaper *Vapaus* was arrested and charged with seditious libel. He was convicted and given a sentence of six months and a fine of \$1000.

On the Pacific coast in Vancouver forty workers were arrested by the police on one or another pretense. Out of these arrests there developed fourteen serious cases in which the charge of "unlawful assembly" was laid and the cases were sent to the supreme court for trial at the early spring assizes. This was intended to break the back of the workers' defense movement by forcing upon us the heavy expenses connected with the proceedings of this court. All fourteen cases were found guilty and the judge imposed "suspended sentences" covering long periods. By this it was expected that the activity of the workers would be dampened to a point where it would become ineffectual.

Eight cases of threatened deportation had to be fought by us during this same period. These came from Vancouver, from Edmonton, and from Ontario and Toronto. Two of these de-

portation threats were carried out; the others were "suspended" as a result of our fight.

One of the latter was the case of Sam Langley, lumber workers' organizer in Port Arthur. He was an Englishman.

I was over at Port Arthur on the case of the lumber organizers who had disappeared. Sam was in attendance at the meetings. He and I were walking down Bay Street in the late afternoon when we were abruptly stopped by two young men in civilian clothes.

"Are you Sam Langley?" was the first question.

"Yes," said Sam.

"We want you to come with us."

"And who might you be?" asked Sam.

Whereupon the young men produced their R.C.M.P. badges and took Sam away from my side, politely saying to me, "Good day, Mr. Smith." The "suspended order" of deportation had fallen on Sam.

I followed along to the well-built jail. I was allowed to enter the door, but was not permitted to see Sam.

It was late that night when the train arrived with two cars filled with workers from western Canada being deported back to various European lands from which they had come years ago to try to make homes for themselves in this "land of the free." I had seen them come; now I was seeing them go. These railway cars were locked. I tried to enter one of them and was gruffly told by the police guard to "beat it." These foreign-born workers had been encouraged to come to Canada to do the hardest work in building the fortunes of the monopolies. They had worked in mines and forests, on canals and railways. Now they were being kicked out because their work in the unions and their struggle for freedom were a challenge to reaction.

We watched the police put Sam aboard one of the cars. We

sang the "Red Flag" on the station platform. We shouted our farewell slogans. The train pulled out and Sam was gone.

I saw Sam again in 1932. It was in old London at one of those monster demonstrations of the English workers in Trafalgar Square. Tom Mann, the founder of the modern English trade union movement, had been arrested by order of the Ramsay MacDonald Government with a view to breaking down the pressure of the organized unemployed workers whose numbers at that time ran into the hundreds of thousands. He had confronted MacDonald with demands that he could not deny and had not the courage to accept: work and decent wages, which it was the clear duty of the government to provide.

I was standing on one of the segments of the Nelson monument. There were 100,000 people surging around the Square. Speakers addressed the crowd from every segment of the monument. It was raining all the time the meeting was in progress. I spoke for about fifteen minutes. Beside me stood Mrs. Tom Mann, a plain woman of the working class, who also spoke. Sam was in the crowd. He caught sight of me and away he came with his arms flying about and shouting my name. He climbed on the platform and "hurrahed" me to the good-natured crowd.

After the big meeting he took me over to the headquarters of the Organization of the Unemployed. Here I met several of the leaders including Wal Hannington, and for some time we discussed the various features of the situation in England and in Canada. I found that Sam Langley was regarded among the workers as a trusted leader. There are many in Canada who will still remember him.

But to get back to Port Arthur. In the fall of 1929 a strike was called in the Maki lumber camps. Voutalainen and Rosvall, two Finnish workers, were acting as organizers of the union and were expected to visit a number of the camps that were involved in the strike. It was cold winter weather in

November 1929. There was heavy snow in the woods. The streams were all frozen over. These men were experienced woodsmen. They had travelled these woods for years at all seasons. They had caches located at convenient points. In these they kept supplies of food and ammunition. They were no more likely to get "lost" than the bear or the fox.

Suddenly they "disappeared." They left one camp to make a visit to another a few miles distant. They bade good-bye to their friends and set out to walk through the woods . . . and they "disappeared." It was found afterwards that they had reached one of the caches belonging to the lumber company, and from there they would have gone to the next cache belonging to Voutalainen, which was a few miles away in the direction of the camp they were going to visit. Voutalainen's cache was never entered. The door was locked and the supplies were standing untouched. Their bodies were found in the spring under the ice in a stream between the two caches. They were fully clothed and had quantities of food on them. They had been concealed all through the winter under the ice of this stream. There was not one chance in a million that they "accidentally" fell into this stream through the ice. That is how they "disappeared."

I took up the fight against this murder by the lumber bosses. We carried the fight into the inquest and to the government at Ottawa.

On April 28, 1930, the funeral of these two heroes was conducted by the workers of Port Arthur and Fort William. Over 4000 strong they marched through the streets of the two cities following to their graves these beloved comrades who had been slain in the fight for freedom. It was a moving tribute of love and esteem.



In 1929 and 1930 we were fighting with our backs to the

wall. Recently I visited Queen's Park to see the grass and the flowers and look over the site of the militant free speech battles of the past.

I remember one of the stormy mass gatherings in this park. Charles Sims was the organizer of that meeting. There must have been 25,000 people there. The police charged, driving the people down towards College Street. The crowd was pouring through the "bottleneck." Some young fellow climbed up on the statue of Sir John A. MacDonald. He had a newspaper in his hand. He began to shout to the people to gather around and carry on the meeting. He didn't get very far with his speech before the police drove through the crowd on their horses after him. He was chased down University Avenue.

They caught him. He came up in court. But the first witness against him upset the Crown's case. He was a policeman, too, a mounted man. He was asked the question: "Do you recognize the accused?"

"Yes."

"Where did you see him?"

"In Queen's Park."

"What was he doing?"

"He was up on Sir John's monument waving his hands and shouting to the people. When the mounted police drove in to get him down off this monument, he struck the noses of the horses with a newspaper. This caused the horses to rear, nearly throwing the riders."

Just here the court asked a question which upset the whole works. "Did he strike your horse?"

"No," said the witness.

"Did he interfere with you in any way?"

"No," said the witness.

"Well, what are you doing here giving evidence? You have no evidence to submit. The case is dismissed."

The young man who climbed upon the monument that day in the historic past became, years later in 1945, the first Communist member to be elected to the Toronto board of control.

I remember another of the stirring meetings of that time. The police were busy trying to break it up. One of the speakers had referred to the conditions in India where there were thousands of workers in prison.

During the applause, Billy Keefe yielded to some powerful impulse and shouted at the top of his voice: "Long live the Indian Revolution!" He was charged with sedition. The judge offered to release him if he would sever his connection with the Communist movement. Billy scornfully rejected the offer. He was sent to jail for six months. Salute to Billy Keefe!

Those battling demonstrations for freedom of speech have entered into the growing working-class tradition of Toronto, breaking through the high-walled bastion of toryism.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Workers Must Defend Themselves

THE WORKING-CLASS movement in Canada was slated by the ruling class for destruction. The capitalists saw abundant mobile labor wandering about the streets, "free labor"— free to starve or sell themselves for naught. Wage-cuts were on the agenda. The trade unions were weak and vacillating.

The cry arose — initiated by reactionary elements — to oust the Communists from the trade union bodies. The desire was to reduce the unions to a state of helplessness. This policy bore all the marks of bureaucratic cooperation within the trade union movement with the dark, selfish demands of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce. In my lifetime every witch-hunt has been followed by wage-cuts, mass unemployment or some other form of extra profit-taking by the capitalists at the expense of the people.

At the end of 1929 the myth of capitalist prosperity exploded. The bubble burst. On October 29 and November 13 the Canadian stock-market crashes brought a total loss estimated at \$5,000,000,000. There were seven million unemployed in the United States. There were already half a million unemployed in Canada. The volume of production was some forty per cent greater than in 1917. In the factories those who had jobs were driven under severe speed-up. The growing numbers of unemployed were used as a weapon to beat down the wages and

conditions of those who happened to have jobs. Prosperity under capitalism was proving to mean only intensified exploitation leading to a crash. We in the national committee of the C.L.D.L. were none of us inspired geniuses. Hundreds of arrests called for our help. We possessed no power to work miracles by which to transform this very difficult situation. We were just members of the working class, most of us members of the Communist party, who had undertaken this pressing task. After serious deliberation, we decided on a new step.

The first Emergency Mass Defense Conference was held April 26 and 27, 1930, in Hamilton. We were making a choice to advance, rather than retreat, in the face of the police terror.

It was a successful conference from every point of view. It was a new weapon of defense. Nearly 200 delegates assembled from some ninety-four organizations. Fifteen of the largest cities in eastern Canada were represented.

For over a year these workers had had before their eyes the object lesson of police terror. The evil role of the capitalist police was seen by them in many of the strike situations, where the police were the servants of the "boss." On the streets the police were beating up the unemployed, who were on the verge of starvation. Free speech and civil rights for all who would speak for the workers were denied.

Experience was teaching the great lesson that the bourgeois state is not a neutral force. All agencies of the state are class institutions. The police, the courts, the jails, the army are not impartial, standing above classes, but are means of coercion, upholding the interests of the capitalists. The well-intentioned liberal reformer and the social-reformist who preach the myth of the impartiality of the state do a great disservice to the people. In the class struggle, the working class must know the truth about the state. The law is the reflection of capitalist class interests. The working class must learn to defend itself.

Our emergency conference showed the militancy of the workers. They were turning to the left. They were prepared to accept Communist leadership. They were prepared to organize in self-defense.

It was my task at the conference to outline certain guiding rules that could be helpful to trade unions and other working-class organizations as well as to individual workers in dealing with the courts and the police. Any worker placed under arrest by the police or by warrant, because of labor activity, must be regarded as a political prisoner. One or more of any number of laws—"vagrancy," "unlawful assembly," "watching and besetting," "sedition"—may be used as the basis of a charge against him. No matter what the charge, he is not to be regarded as a criminal. His arrest must be regarded as an attack by the capitalists against labor.

I proposed that we adopt a policy of workers' self-defense in the courts. The accused worker is carrying the class struggle from the factory and from the street into the courts. If at all possible, he must speak for himself before the court. It is a role of great importance for his union, his fellow-workers and himself.

I suggested certain guiding rules for a worker in dealing with the police. He must note that the policeman is a paid agent of the ruling class. He must not try to "convert" him, must not argue with him. The rule was not to discuss or explain anything to him but to give him name and address and nothing more. In the police station, he would meet more police officers. He should request to be allowed to phone his friends. But he should make no statements, sign no papers, speak with no unknown person. He should guard against being drawn into side talks. He must not be afraid of threats, must not "confess" for anyone else, nor believe a reported "confession" by anyone else. Over the phone he must say little—it is "tapped." He should

ask his friends to arrange bail. This would give a chance to prepare defense. These rules were based on bitter experience in thousands of cases of arrests.

In many cases, spies and informers were put in the same cell or a nearby cell with our prisoners. I said no worker arrested for labor activity should discuss his case with other prisoners or casual visitors. I said there must be vigilance when the police appear with a search warrant at a labor hall or office or at a worker's dwelling. In one case a Communist office was "searched" by the "Red Squad." After they left it was found they had "planted" an illegal liquor bottle on the premises. They returned shortly, no doubt intending to find the "evidence" and make the arrests. They went straight to the place where the "evidence" should be. They were greatly annoyed to find that it was gone. So I proposed that all police searches should be persistently attended by those on the premises. No comment should be made but it was important to see that no "evidence" was planted as a basis for a later charge.

The International Red Aid in Moscow sent greetings to our conference. They reminded us of the thousands of imprisoned workers in India, Japan, China, Indonesia, Arabia, and urged us to fight on their behalf. Louis Engdahl from New York, leader of the International Labor Defense of the U.S.A., attended the conference. He was received with loud enthusiasm and made an inspiring address.

Beckie Buhay was now playing her full leading part in our defense movement. She came to the organization with many gifts. She had been a prominent member of the old Socialist Party of Canada and became a foundation member of the Communist Party of Canada. She had a keen mind, a generous heart and a good will. Her qualities of leadership were seen at this conference. We shared the leadership.

My work was largely concerned with the legal side, with

social needs and with public work. This called for much planning and travelling. In the Toronto district there was always a heavy docket of cases, involving much detail as to bonds, fees, family needs. During the heaviest years of this struggle, W. H. (Bill) Dekker was the untiring secretary of the Toronto area. I take some personal pride in Bill. One day in Welland, I found him. He was among the unemployed. I said: "Bill, would you come to Toronto and help us with the C.L.D.L.?" Bill came. He did grand work. Years before he had been one of the founders of the Communist party.

Alfred C. Campbell was later also a driving force on our executive. Harry Guralnick worked with us and helped greatly. With these and other valiant friends I worked in close harmony. Together we achieved much.

Our western emergency conference was convened a few weeks after the eastern one. I rushed out to Calgary to help lead the work of that splendid meeting. I saw clear evidence in these gatherings of a rapid advance. They were milestones on the road onward to greater things.

* * *

The work called for many journeys to Ottawa on my part. I became quite well known to many of the dignitaries of the government. Protests on deportation cases took me to the Immigration Department. Cases of release from prison on ticket-of-leave brought me into close contact with the Department of Justice. Delegations and petitions took me to the prime minister's office.

I recall one of these journeys which took place a few months after the famous general elections of 1930. The reins of office had fallen, as it were, from the adroit hands of Mr. King, and had been eagerly grasped by the heavy hands of Mr. Bennett, the unhappy premier who had promised to blast his way into new world markets.

At this point the Workers' Unity League took the field and challenged the attention of Mr. Bennett. The right-wing policies in the A. F. of L., with splittings and expulsions, forced the formation of the W.U.L. as a vehicle of economic self-defense for the workers. This militant left-wing group, under the leadership of Tom McEwen, had succeeded in organizing its forces in numerous industrial centers across Canada. The problem of unemployment was first on the agenda with the W.U.L. Three main demands were advanced for action: 1) Non-contributory unemployment insurance, 2) A five-day week with a seven-hour day, 3) A minimum wage of \$25 per week for men and women workers.

The W.U.L. prepared a bill embodying these proposals for presentation, as a government measure, to parliament. A monster petition was circulated which secured over 100,000 signatures calling for this program to be adopted. They proposed to appear in Ottawa and to place their proposals and petition before the new premier. I had taken an active part in the campaign and the request was made that I should arrange an appointment for the delegation to meet Mr. Bennett.

The auspicious day arrived in April 1931. The delegation, with Tom at its head, entered the building and was ushered into the Railway Committee Room, a huge chamber capable of seating some 300 people. We were thirty-five in all.

Suddenly, a door opens and Mr. Bennett enters. He lays down his walking stick, removes his gloves and swings out of his light coat, placing them, along with his hard hat, on a chair near the door.

He dashes to the platform and seats himself. "I want some paper!" he exclaims in a loud voice. The flunkies all begin to dash about hunting for paper. In a minute one of them runs to the desk with a bundle of about 500 sheets and drops it before the great man. "Now," he shouts, and this is the first

notice of us he condescends to take, "I want the names and addresses of all of you."

He began with me, because he happened to know my name. "Smith, what's your name and where do you live?" All of our names were asked for and written down on paper with his own hand. He was in a fit of ill-humor.

Our delegation was ninety per cent made up of English-Canadian workers. Mr. Bennett had expected he would receive names of foreign-born people which he could hand over to the police for intimidation and, possibly, deportation.

"What have you got to say?" was the next remark from the gentleman on the platform. He pointed his question again at me. I introduced Tom as the leader and spokesman of the delegation.

In reply to McEwen's clear and decisive statements, the prime minister arose in stiff formality as if to deliver judgment in court. This man's words were amazing for their utter irrelevance and bombastic pretense. We were informed that the destitution which prevailed among working people was due to "wasteful living" and "unwise investments." He denounced unemployment insurance. It would undermine the "free institutions" of Canada.

At the end, as agreed, I voiced a request for the government to pay the expenses of the delegation returning to their homes. This was bluntly refused. I wish I could tell all about how, at this point, Gideon Robertson offered to give us a dinner at Bowles Lunch! I refused the invitation. Everyone applauded.

The last I saw of Mr. Bennett that day was as we were going out. I looked back and Bennett was shaking his finger angrily at Tom, shouting: "I'll not be misrepresented by you, young man."

And Tom shouted back: "Never fear, I'll not misrepresent you, Mr. Bennett."

That night as I lay half asleep a strange picture arose before my mind. Many scenes of the day seemed to blend into one immense panorama with multitudes of figures, known and unknown, moving along, going somewhere.

As it were, I followed the vast crowd into a building. It was shaped like a huge bowl. The people were eagerly pouring into this place, until there was a sea of human faces gazing at the brilliant splendor of the lighted platform.

"What is this place?" I asked my guide.

"This is the House of Judgment," he said. "These people have gathered here from all the earth. Today is an occasion of special interest. The people are filled with stern enthusiasm. They have come to see judgment pronounced on the vilest criminals of the earth. You must wait and you shall see."

There seemed to be no delay. The gigantic door on one side of the stage opened. Three enrobed judges entered with easy dignity. Again, another set of huge doors was opened giving entrance into the lower part of the stage. An almost savage noise swept into the building. It mounted in fury. A company of strong men entered escorting two well-fed creatures whose angry roars seemed to fill the place, creating alarm for many.

"Who are they?" I asked.

"Their names are Unemployment and War. They are brothers," came the reply.

The creatures in the dock had the faces of monsters, but they wore the finest clothes. They carried canes and wore gloves. The people gasped as they beheld them. Their names stirred in many minds dark and bitter memories of years of suffering that had left indelible marks.

The voice of one of the judges calmed the multitude. He said: "Prisoners in the dock, the day of judgment has come. It is the firm intention of this assembly to deal with you. You stand condemned. All of your breed must be removed from the

midst of society if happiness and good life are to be made possible for the masses of our people."

Upon hearing these thrilling words, the great audience arose quickly to its feet and cried with loud voices:

"We are witnesses against these monsters of crime. The day of reckoning has come. We are the representatives of all the common people of the world. We are the workers, the wealth producers. We have produced wealth in prodigious quantities — heaped up and running over — but many of us have been starved and degraded by these monsters. They must cease to exist. The day of reckoning has come."

CHAPTER TWELVE

Miners' Blood on Estevan Coal

THE TOWN of Estevan squats on the prairie in southern Saskatchewan and is celebrated for its coal mines and for the big strike of the Bienfait miners in 1931.

There were sixteen miners arrested that September day, the 29th, after three had been shot to death. Afterwards there were six more arrests made by the R.C.M.P.

The miners had organized a parade to make a fitting prelude to a public meeting in the town of Estevan. They never made a "riot." If there was a "riot," as the police alleged, it was the result of the activity of the police. It was a police "riot." The parade was legal and orderly until the police made it disorderly. That portion of the parade which escaped the police net went into Estevan and out again and there was no trouble. If it had not been for the police, there would have been no trouble in Estevan on September 29, 1931.

The miners assembled their trucks and cars at Bienfait. It was, at first, inspiring to see the long line of cars sweeping along over the prairie road in the September sunshine, to hear the jolly songs and jokes as they drove away. But the scene changed when they reached Estevan. They were met on the outskirts by the R.C.M.P. The police grabbed Martin Day, leader of the miners, and dragged him out of the car. Then the police started smashing the car windows with their sticks. The fire brigade

turned the hose on the women and children. Then the police opened fire. They used machine guns against the unarmed, defenseless men and women. Women stepped in front of the guns to save the lives of their men in several instances. The miners crowded in the trucks were fired upon. They jumped out and tried to defend themselves as best they could with sticks and stones. Over forty were wounded. Three were killed, one on the spot; another two died in hospital. And it was not in the Estevan hospital. They had been taken miles away to Weyburn hospital because the local doctors employed by the company refused to give treatment to the wounded and dying. Later that day the police went out with machine guns and rifles from door to door, arresting the leaders, twenty-two in all.

The trials began in October. I went West to give assistance at the hearings, to advise the accused and to direct, in some measure, the manner in which counsel for the workers' defense, under the C.L.D.L., would proceed. I was in the town for over three weeks. The role of our Defense League was never more deeply appreciated than it was during those days by the miners and their wives and families. They regarded my presence in that court room as a guarantee that they were not fighting alone. To them I symbolized the organized workers of Canada. I was the visible pledge that strong protest would arise against any heavy-handed dealings. We were not looking for justice in the courts of capitalism in 1931. Our task was to expose the lack of it.

It was a strange coincidence that at the Estevan trials the presiding judge should have been Judge Embury, while at the later trials of the Communist leaders in Toronto the judge should have been Judge Wright. These two judges were the men sent by the Borden Government to Europe in the First Great War election to take the votes of the army overseas.

Judge Embury was a big, loud-spoken person. The crown prosecutor received \$57 a day and \$10 expenses. We retained Mr. Heffernan of Regina for the defense. We paid him \$2650 and then he sued us for \$400 in addition. The case is still pending, somewhere.

I stood at the telegraph office in the Estevan station one night and sent out appeals to some twenty points. The situation was very difficult. In the next three days over \$1200 was received. Loyal friends responded to my urgent cry. I praise them for it anew at this hour.

The daily sessions of the court attracted crowds of people. The miners, young and old, came because of deep concern. Young people attended the hearings. The room would accommodate about 250 and it was always filled to capacity. It was a period of rapid education for most of these people. Feelings were excited by what they heard. The class war was being staged in the court. The judge was very stern. Sometimes at a tense point hundreds of feet would begin to shuffle and murmurs would sound forth. Then we would hear a loud voice: "Now! Now! Order! Order! Silence! Any more of this and the court will be cleared."

This court room contained a miniature picture of the social system. The miners were there. They were the Canadian wage-earners. These men got 25 cents per ton of 2240 pounds for digging coal from the earth. If any complained that a ton should be only 2000 pounds, he was fired. All houses and stores belonged to the company; the miners paid exorbitant rents and prices. The company deducted \$1.50 each month from each miner for medical services; but if a miner went to the company doctors he had to pay them their full fee in cash before they would look at him. The miners were docked for boots, for slickers, for powder, for sharpening tools, for breakages. They built a hall and the company appropriated it. They

got 25 cents for digging 2240 pounds of coal but when they bought coal they paid \$3.00 for 2000 pounds.

The coal operators were also there in the court room. They were the ruling class. They made the laws to protect their doings. Profit was something for nothing. They owned the jobs and fixed the wages. There they were — the ruling class — profiteers — robbers, facing the robbed — the exploiters charging the exploited miners with crimes for complaining about being exploited until life became endless misery. They were furious when the miners organized a union. They called on their governments to send the state forces in to crush these miners down once more. This was done in the name of "law and order." There were no criminals in that court that day aside from the representatives of capitalism.

Sam Scarlett was an outstanding figure in the trials. He was accused of "rioting." It was a baseless accusation. He sat in a car seven miles away at the time of the alleged "riot."

A perceptible murmur ran through the room when Sam was brought into court. When he arose in the prisoner's dock and turned his deep eyes upon the nervous countenance of the judge, I experienced a flash of illumination. It seemed as if the relationships in that court were suddenly reversed. The accused man, standing erect and composed in the dock with a guard beside him, seemed to be the impartial judge. And the judge, in his gown of office, seemed to become the guilty accused.

And by the suffering workers in the mines; by wasted bodies of half-starved women and children in the cabins; by poverty-stricken youths robbed of their earnings; by the dead miners in their new-made graves, slain by the guns of capitalism, all personified that day in Sam Scarlett, the condemnation could fall nowhere else!

Years later Sam was being sought by the police on the charge

of "subversive activity." That was in 1940. He was very ill. As a consequence of the years of toil and imprisonment endured in the cause of the workers, his heart was weakened. I was called to visit him one night when it seemed he could not survive. I was overjoyed when he regained his strength and was able to make his way to New York. But a few weeks later I received word that he had collapsed hurrying along on the street.

I had met Sam many years ago in Saskatoon and I heard him speak at mass meetings in Winnipeg on Sundays in a movie theater. He was to me a bringer of light. I, too, was a seeker for the New Day.

Sam played on the world's champion football team which made an international tour. He joined the Industrial Workers of the World and became a leader on the executive. In 1918 he was arrested along with others for opposing the entry of the U.S.A. into the war. A big trial was staged. Sam was sent to prison at Leavenworth for twenty years. His total commitments to prison for labor activity reached the figure of ninety-nine years.

When he was in Leavenworth, the noise of the engines distressed him. One day he ventured to speak to the guard. "I can fix those engines," he told the guard.

"How would you like to tell that to the governor?"

"All right, take me to him and I will tell him."

This was done. Sam was given the job. It was a big one. Later Sam began to talk football to the governor. Soon a league of teams was organized.

Then came the day when the governor called Sam to his office to inform him that, as a reward for his good work, it had been decided to grant him a full release from prison. What did he have to say?

"A. E.," said Sam in recounting the event to me with emo-

tion shaking his body, "I never was in a tougher spot. What was I to do? I managed to tell him I could not leave my comrades in prison. I would accept the release if he would make it include us all."

In a few weeks the release of all was ordered. They had served six years. Sam was deported to his native Scotland. In a short time he came to Canada. He joined the Communist party. After Estevan, he served ten months in Saskatoon jail. I salute him!

Accompanying Sam and Alderman Joe Forkin of Winnipeg, Annie Buller had entered the coal field to help the miners in their struggle. She was arrested and tried. Her sentence was one year in prison plus a fine of \$500 or an additional six months. We appealed the case and the new trial commenced on March 9, 1933.

This second trial of Annie Buller, the woman labor leader, in that obscure prairie town, was a noteworthy event. It put Estevan on the records for all time. It gave new significance to the lost strike of the Bienfait coal miners. The new trial brought a sentence of one year in Battleford prison. But the picture of Annie Buller in that court that day was thrilling beyond words.

It is morning. The solemn judge is in his seat. The officers of the court are all in place. The R.C.M.P. give their color to the crowded room. The judge informs the prisoner that she may now make her address to the jury. It is the moment. Everyone is tense. The young woman stands up. She faces the judge and court and jury with appropriate words.

Then she takes a warm look at the people. They are her people. Silence grips the whole company. Not an eye is winked. Her personality tensed by the ordeal through which she is now called upon to pass, her clarion tones of voice, her firm confidence, the courage of her bearing, hold the eyes of all upon

her. Her words are blows. They fall upon the squirming officers.

She confronted the operators as they sat smugly in the court. She silenced the exploiters. She drove shafts of truth into their consciences. Imagine this champion of labor, standing on the ground where men had been shot down, turning suddenly to a miner in the witness box and darting this question: "Did you know Nick Narvan? Where is he now?" The Crown protests. The judge raps and calls for "order." The miner exclaims: "He is dead."

And that night in every listener's home in Estevan, in every cafe and hotel dining-room, in every silent chamber of reflection, the name of Nick Narvan is murmured with hushed breath.

In every land there stand the sacred shrines of the martyred dead of the working class, the heroes whose names are talismanic words that inspire us in carrying forward the struggle for a New Day. Such are the graves of Nick Narvan, Julian Hryshko, Peter Markunt. They died for us. They were murdered in a labor parade on the public highway by government police without the slightest excuse for the crime. We owe them a great debt. We will collect and pay the debt.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

“Guilty” Under Section 98!

IN 1931 THE class struggle was staged in the courts of law right across the Dominion. At the head of the list came Tim Buck and his seven colleagues, Scientific Socialists who stood forth in Toronto charged under Section 98 of the Criminal Code.

In Windsor, Harry Binder, with three others, was in the dock. In Kirkland Lake, Peter Boychuk and A. Salminen with seven others were facing charges. In Calgary, eight workers were charged with John O’Sullivan and Phil Luck at their head.

In Vancouver, a dozen workers were up for hearings with Mr. and Mrs. Herndle as chief offenders. In Saskatoon, twenty-seven young unemployed camp internees were held for trials.

In Montreal Leslie Morris was charged with sedition and sentenced to one year in Bordeaux jail. Philip Halperin was charged with him. As chairman of the public meeting at which Morris spoke, he had taken a standing vote on a resolution. The police swore in court that he had said: “Will all those in favor of the revolution please stand up?” On this evidence, he would have served a year in prison had not death intervened. Dave Kashtan, Phillip Richer, Fred Rose, Dave Chalmers, Tom Miller and others before the Recorder of Montreal were sentenced to prison on the say-so of a policeman and on a structure of lying statements. This arbitrary judgment paved

the way for the infamous Padlock Law. In this same court, in 1938, Wilfred Lessard was convicted. His home had been padlocked. A Communist newspaper and Communist pamphlets had been found there. He broke the padlock and entered. When the police arrived he was shaving. He was sentenced to two years.

Our League was defending all these workers. The contradictions in the capitalist system were met in issue in the courts. Socialism, the future society of man, in the dock, accused and persecuted. Capitalism, the deviser of misery for multitudes, sitting in the seat of judgment. Communism was well represented. Not one man said "guilty." These accused men were the pathfinders.

Premier Richard Bedford Bennett, K.C., was a corporation lawyer. He had long been a member of the "invisible government." He was now the visible government. He was a multi-millionaire, owner of the Eddy Match Company. He was an overweening egotist, of meager culture and of orthodox religion. He introduced himself into the office of Premier as the domineering boss.

The federal parliament had just concluded its first long session under his premiership. Unemployment was the main issue. Bennett was sending the unemployed to "labor camps" at an allowance of twenty cents a day. The Henry Government was in power in Ontario. Attorney-General Price was in cahoots with Bennett. Confronted with the social and economic crisis of capitalism, these men decided to resort to methods of suppression by force. They beheld in the Communist party the chief obstacle to their designs. They decreed that the Communist party should be wiped out of existence. It was a large order. How they hated the Communists!

I quote the words of an editorial which appeared in the *Mail and Empire*, August 12, 1931: "Assisted by Hon. Hugh

Guthrie, Minister of Justice, Colonel Price struck at the very heart of the Communist party. Nine raids, all timed simultaneously for seven o'clock, began a campaign to prove in the courts that the Communist Party of Canada is an unlawful organization. Massing his forces on three fronts, Attorney-General Price last night launched an offensive designed to wipe out of existence the Communist Party of Canada."

I remember well that day, August 11. A meeting of the enlarged executive of our League was held at a summer camp near Woodbridge, a very beautiful spot. We returned to the city about eight o'clock. On visiting the office we learned the news of the arrest of Tim Buck and John Boychuk. The full significance was soon apparent to us. We immediately began to organize the widest and strongest campaign for their defense. The campaign we started that day lasted for over three years.

On Monday, November 2, 1931, eight men of the political leadership of the Communist Party of Canada came up for trial. They were: Tim Buck, John Boychuk, Tom Cacic, Tom McEwen, Sam Carr, Tom Hill, M. Bruce and Matthew Popovich.

The issue was never more clearly joined. The courts were never more definitely employed as an agency of capitalist dictatorship. The deepening class struggle of the workers for economic freedom was never more specifically associated with the leaders of communism. The hearings lasted for eight days and when they ceased the conflict was not closed.

With fitting ceremony and suppressed excitement, the court opened in the morning. Justice Wright presided. I sat with the lawyers at the counsel table as the representative of the C.L.D.L.

The trial opened in a practically "closed court." The police guard surrounding the City Hall excluded the many hundreds of citizens who came seeking entrance.

Defense Counsel Hugh J. MacDonald fired the first shot. He presented a motion to the court to quash the indictment. It was a "bad indictment." No specific acts done by the accused were cited. There was no bill of particulars dealing with each accused. He put up a strong argument, but his motion was refused.

The day was ended by a "shocking incident." A leaflet was produced in court which demanded the release of the eight accused and announced a protest meeting for that night. It was "contempt of court." Two printers were arrested and fined \$25 each. They were unable to say who had ordered the leaflets. The accused were refused bail in order to keep them from attending the meeting.

The weakest spot in the big trial was the jury. I kept a close watch on those twelve men all through the proceedings. There were times when some of the faces registered a total blank. I was informed reliably that careful research on the personnel of the jury panel was carried out by the police for weeks before the trial. Many of the prospective jurymen were visited to find out their attitude towards the left-wing labor movement. It was a stand-pat, police-selected jury.

But apart from the court jury, there was another jury — the "Workers' Jury." This, too, consisted of twelve men. They were selected by workers at conferences held across the country. From far and wide, over Canada, they came to Toronto to fulfil the task given them. That "jury" was composed of two miners, a lumberjack, a machinist, an auto-mechanic, a draftsman, a printing pressman, a carpenter, a laborer, a laundress, a farmer and an unemployed worker from the Unemployed Association. Seven of them were trade unionists of the A.F.L.

They attended the court as best and as often as they could. I can testify that the majority of them were present every day. Whether or not this was known to the police I cannot say. The

report of the "Workers' Jury" was published by our League after the trials. Several of the jury members delivered reports to public meetings in their own districts. It was a victory and a good lesson for the future.

Crown Counsel Norman Somerville, K.C., made his opening address on Tuesday. He told the jury that he intended to prove that the accused men were members of the Communist Party of Canada and that they were parties to a "seditious conspiracy." In this amazing conspiracy were involved "advocacy of a constant struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie" and "the abolition of all debts of the farmers."

The other feature of the second morning was the reading of the "charges" by the clerk. Never before had such a document been presented in court. Deep and awful was the silence which fell upon the court. At the call of their names the eight men stood erect. "You are charged," began the clerk in solemn tones — and then — just then — the clock in the City Hall tower began the stroke of twelve. "Bing-bong," rang the clock. "Overthrow the government," piped the clerk. "Binging-bonging," rang the clock. "Force and violence," chanted the clerk. "Bonged-binged," pealed the clock. "An illegal organization," exclaimed the robed clerk. It was a rude interruption the clock had made. All who were there will remember.

In this vague array of charges the Crown was actually saying simply that Tim Buck and his colleagues had "dangerous thoughts." In the allegations made against them, there was no charge of a single act of violence against the government, nor of having advocated or attempted its forcible overthrow. There could be no such charges!

The indictment was based on expressions of opinion quoted from pamphlets, papers and books. The content of these quotations was in the nature of a prediction of the course that events in history would follow as the mounting revolutionary

determination to be free would take possession of the working class of one country after another, and would be met by the resistance of the ruling class with "force and violence." On this basis, these eight Communist leaders were being held up as "men of violence" and "malicious plotters."

Tim Buck made his famous address to the jury on November 10. It was ten minutes to four o'clock in the afternoon when Judge Wright, without any previous warning, called on Tim to give this important address. Tim spoke, with meager preparation, until seven p.m. He made the courtroom his tribune.

What a burden this man carries! What a precious and costly burden! He is the leader of the party of Canadians which constitutes the political repository of the treasure of Marxism, the golden truth, dug from the very heart of the experience of human society. This truth is comparable to the pearl of great price which, when a man sees, he will sell all he possesses and buy.

This accused Communist stood in the perfunctory capitalist court and turned the charges against the prosecution. Tim Buck presented the truths of communism against the lies of capitalism. Here is a series of quotations revealing the high points of his speech to the jury:

The Communists disdain to conceal their aims. We are on trial charged with advocating something which we have not advocated.

The use of force and violence is the chief method of rule of capitalism. All over this country force and violence are being employed by the ruling class. From 1925 to the Estevan strike, when three miners were shot to death, there has been violence. This trial is part of the method of capitalist force and violence.

The firm basis of the Communist movement is to be found in the *Communist Manifesto* of 83 years ago. This *Manifesto* is today a world document. It is no longer to be regarded as an exclusive possession of the Communists; it belongs to the world working class. The Communist movement is international because the problems involved in the class struggle are the same in every nation. The slogan is for

all: "Workers of the World Unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains. You have a world to gain!"

Imperialism has developed the prerequisites for socialism. The exploited workers become Communists. The party grows out of the struggle.

We are arriving at the period of the historic ending of capitalism. The present system of society cannot endure.

Gentlemen: Revolutions arise out of conditions. Communism has its roots in the masses of the people who will eventually build it.

I hope this attempt at suppression of our party will only increase the realization of the need for working-class organization. If it does, it will have served a good purpose, and will have raised communism from a street corner discussion to a question for general consideration and discussion as to what it is and how it is to be brought about.

Thus spoke Tim Buck.

One hundred and three exhibits were produced in the trial. These included the works of such writers as Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, V. I. Lenin, Joseph Stalin and others which were quoted to "prove" the doctrine of "force and violence."

But, great as these authorities were, it was not on these that the Crown's case rested. A "surprise witness" was heralded to appear on the third day of the trial. He was proclaimed to be an expert. His name was John Leopold, sergeant of the R.C.M.P. This man made his appearance in court clad in a blazing red coat, blue bagged trousers with a wide yellow stripe down each leg, and carrying a big hat and cane. Short of stature, he bobbed his way to the witness box and took a perfunctory oath. He was the sole "hero" of Section 98. We all knew this individual. He was no surprise to the accused. I had often seen him in the printshop of *The Worker*, tying up bundles. We knew him as Jack Esselwein. He had been in the party as a painter, a member of the painter's union. He attended meetings and social affairs. He was expelled from the Communist party in 1928, having been exposed as a spy.

Standing in the witness box that day, the Crown's star witness was a most unhappy man. He wiped his face again and

again, although there was no excess of heat in the room. He drank glass after glass of water to moisten his aching throat. He gazed at the ceiling. He watched the clock. He counted the bulbs in the huge chandelier. But he never looked at Tim or any of the others. He did not want to catch their eyes. For seven years this man had acted as a deceiver and a liar. Humanity has always regarded such as the lowest of the low. This was the bringer of the basic testimony of the Crown against the leaders of the workers.

His testimony was, in a sense — a ridiculous sense — nothing short of what might be called "terrible." He related his joining of the Communist party in 1921 when he was an official of the A. F. of L. council in Regina. He told about conventions of the party at which he was present in 1923 and at later dates. He "exposed" the fact that the emblem of the Communist International was the hammer and sickle, and that the party was organized into departments. He told about the organization of the party at the beginning when it was illegal. He said he contributed to party funds. There was not one jot or tittle of evidence of any act or deed of any sort performed by the accused men submitted to the court.

In his charge to the jury the judge referred to this "star" witness saying: "Here the evidence would appear to indicate, if you accept it, that this Communist party divides the people of Canada into two classes. . . . In a democratic country . . . is it a just, proper and lawful thing to set one of these classes against the other?"

The trial of the eight Communist leaders took its point of departure from the infamous Section 98, which was a legal monstrosity "conceived in sin and shapen in iniquity." Sadistic legalism had waited twelve years to apply this piece of forty-minute legislation of the hysterical Tories of 1919. Amid the flaming indignation of the masses of the workers against their

vile methods, the same ilk carried through the abominable frame-up of the Communists, based on the "evidence" of sneering police. They were accused of being members of the Communist party, which they had always openly proclaimed. The judge held that the "evidence" showed that they divided the people of Canada into classes. Under Section 98 they were guilty until proved innocent. Innocent of what?

It was inspiring to behold in this court these men who were seized with the vision of a better day for the Canadian people. This vision was their guide as they stood in the prisoner's dock. It should have served as evidence of an elevation of thought and character. But before a prejudiced court, bound with biased concepts, what is Innocence? What is Truth? What is Justice? The court was enslaved. Its sanctity was gone.

The jury had before them many "facts" that were in no sense proof of guilt. The crisis in the capitalist world, the swift advance of the Soviet Union from one to another degree of rich development, the growth of communism over the earth, the establishment of the organized Communist movement in Canada — were facts devoid of any taint of criminality. But the Crown labored and sweated and imposed upon all this a criminal meaning under Section 98. About this the jury remained ignorant.

Into their private quarters the jury retired. Soon they notified the sheriff that they were "ready" to render their "verdict." Armed police stood about with lethal weapons at their belts. The clerk in sonorous voice puts the question: "Gentlemen of the jury, have you arrived at a verdict?" The foreman answers, "Yes."

"What is your verdict?"

The foreman recites the same answer to the three counts: "Guilty."

These men had gone from the court at 6:30 o'clock and re-

turned at eight. In that short time they had eaten supper and pondered evidence covering eight days of hearings. It was a machine verdict.

With this verdict, communism became a "crime" in Canada. The party was placed under the ban. With gloating, the Tory mumbler heard the jury's decision against Tim Buck and his comrades.

But we knew it was not the end. Long ago there was a day when Christianity was a "crime" in ancient Rome. The Christians lived as Communists in that day. "Christianity" was said by its enemies to possess a "contumacious and inflexible obstinacy." It spread out from the city. The Christians were persecuted then as the Communists are persecuted now.

It is my hope that the working class of Canada will never forget the Communist Trial of 1931. There is in it an enduring lesson for this generation and for succeeding generations in our country.

It is the lesson of the importance to the Canadian working class of a strong party of their own. It is the lesson that the historic period has arrived when a great step forward must be made by human society.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

“They Tried to Murder This Man”

WITH UNBOWED heads and clear consciences the eight Communists heard themselves sentenced to five years in penitentiary by Judge Wright. It was a vindictive, vengeful sentence.

We decided to lodge an appeal. This appeal would come up for hearing in February 1932. The total amount of bail required by the chief justice of the appeal court to secure the temporary release of the men from custody reached the enormous figure of \$160,000 apart from the personal liability laid upon each man. To the credit of the workers it must be stated that we had no serious difficulty in raising this sum.

Then arose the question: who would make the argument? It was not so easy to find the answer. There was no clamor among the legal lights for the job. One man thought it was worth \$10,000 to handle the case. “People think I am a clever lawyer and I make them pay for it,” he said.

Mr. W. I. Helmuth, K.C., was finally retained. It was Thursday afternoon. The case was called for the following Wednesday. I had agreed to have the cheque for \$3500 in the office of our lawyer on Monday. I had four days in which to realize the funds. On Friday I went to Montreal where I met with interested friends. Sunday night I left for home with \$1000 cash in my possession. On Monday we were able to pay over the required amount.

Chief Justice William Mulock and four of his associates composed the court. They were devoid of fanaticism, but they were men of the class whose mentality had been limited, impressed and moulded from childhood by the impact of the religion, philosophy and economics of capitalism. The court quashed the conspiracy conviction. It was so obviously far-fetched and absurd that they could not pass it over. But they left untouched the harsh sentence of five years in the penitentiary. Again it was a class verdict, because there was not a fragment of evidence showing any act of the accused aimed at the forcible overthrow of the government.

It was a vicious blow at the working-class movement. But it was also one of history's galvanic charges by which many thousands are advanced in their education by shock illumination. Our comrades stood at the point where history needed just such men. I remembered the words of the prophet Ezekiel at another such moment in history: "I sought for a man that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap for the land."

On February 19, 1932, these eight Communist leaders were transported from the Don jail to Kingston penitentiary. This penitentiary was a sordid institution expressing the blind stupidity of capitalism in dealing with the problems of crime and criminals.

Their rules and regulations came into the possession of the Defense League. We studied them carefully. We had direct and eager interest in them after our men had entered there.

"Every convict shall observe silence, and shall not hold communication with another convict." This was a sample of the rules. A world of silent men, speechless they must go day after day for months and years. Men with words in their minds and forbidden to speak a single word. Was there any remedy for crime to be found in that? It was barbaric. All the rules were of the same sort.

On Monday, at three p.m. October 17, 1932, the riot in Kingston "pen" broke. It involved some 450 inmates of the prison. It was the culmination of complaints against intolerable conditions fermenting for months and years. The rioters demanded shorter hours of work and more time for recreation. This was limited to fifteen minutes each day in the open air. No games of any sort were provided. The men asked for more tobacco and a supply of cigarette papers. They demanded "better food" and more of it. The cells were cold, so they requested "more heat in the cell blocks." Radios in the cells was another of the astonishing demands. Greater freedom of correspondence was a request.

Mr. Bennett at Ottawa decided upon a secret investigation. As a result, charges were laid against a great many prisoners, including Tim Buck. No one knows, except the investigators, whether Mr. Bennett personally insisted that Tim be charged.

At one point the men had seized the warden and held him as a hostage to protect themselves against the guards who came armed with shotguns and rifles. It looked as if they would be slaughtered. The warden ordered the military to be called. They came fully equipped to kill. The door of the main industrial building was smashed by the use of a large truck. The guards fired into the crowd, wounding many. Smoke bombs were thrown, which forced the men out, all blackened and choking. One group, barricaded in the mail-bag building, stood its ground to the last. They threatened to set fire to the building, and declared they would die in the flames unless the troops were dismissed. The withdrawal of the troops was ordered.

The capitalist press in Toronto, Montreal, Hamilton and Ottawa declared, without a shred of evidence, that the riot was planned by the Communists. It was a plot, they alleged, for a wholesale delivery of the prisoners, in the confusion of which,

with outside help, the eight Communists were to make their escape and be spirited away by friends.

Unhesitatingly, we replied to these allegations and similar statements made by the R.C.M.P. We declared: "We reject the suggestion that any workers' organization or group are the instigators of the plots for jail breaks or prison riots, so luridly suggested by the Ottawa authorities and the press. We are not criminals nor are our eight leaders in the cells in Kingston."

This was a period when the going was heavy. There was no attempt to evade the facts of the situation. They stared us in the face. The leaders of the party were taken away. The Communist party was made illegal and had to go underground. There would be a falling away of some. It was a severe test on every single member and every organized branch of the party. Weak places would be manifest. The psychology of fear took control of many. All these things were early symptoms of the "death blow" which was to have been the finish of communism in Ontario and Canada.

The black record of the thirties reached its lowest depth of shame and disgrace on October 20, 1932, when some underling in Kingston penitentiary made an attempt to murder Tim Buck in cold blood in his cell. I heard of it in Montreal as I was about to board ship for the Soviet Union.

It was early evening. Without warning of any sort Tim was assailed by shots shortly after he had entered his cell. It was situated in Block D and was elevated from the ground. Along that stretch of wall there were seventy-six windows, each one giving light to a cell. Any accidental shooting might have smashed any one of the windows, but the fact was that while a number of shots were fired, no window in all the long line was broken except the one in Buck's cell. The target had been carefully defined.

The first shot came crashing through the window when Tim

was arranging his bed. Naturally he was alarmed and gave thought at once to find the source and occasion for the shooting. He reached to extinguish the light. As he did so there came another shot which barely passed over his head. And before he could find cover another passed below his chin and close to his throat. It was only sheer good luck he was not killed on the spot.

The authorities hushed it up. It remained for Tim himself to force the facts into the open. He was called as a witness in the "riot" trial of one of the convicts. He told the story of the shooting from the witness box.

Shortly afterwards, Judge Madden called the two lawyers who had been in the court to his chambers, and in serious words made known to them that he "was much impressed with the statement of this man Buck." He informed them that he wanted to go up to the institution and see the cell in which Buck had said he was locked at the time. He asked the lawyers to go with him. They went to the cell. They saw the marks of the shots on the walls. The judge saw them and said, gravely shaking his head to emphasize his words: "There is no doubt about it, they tried to murder this man." Mr. Frank Regan was one of the lawyers present that day in the cell. He told me the whole story before he died.

In prompt sequence we confronted the Bennett Government with this terrible crime. I remember the first attempt we made to get the ear of Mr. Bennett after the attack on Tim. We were ushered into the office of the prime minister in the East Block at Ottawa. Mr. Bennett was in such ill humor that day he never so much as said "Good Day" to anyone. Along with him were Guthrie, Meighen, Gordon and Dupr  s. Mr. Bennett received us with a growl. "Well! What do you want now?" I presented a full statement on what had occurred and our proposals. We asked for an investigation. We placed responsibility

upon the government. The response was a blanket denial of the whole affair. No one had shot at Buck. It was all a figment of our imagination. They had apparently decided, beforehand, that their safest course was to deny the whole thing and brazen it out.

They gave the marked impression of men whose consciences were not clear.

We took the matter to the public. We made known the facts. Then Mr. Guthrie made a declaration that the shots were fired to "cow" Buck, to make him cease agitating in the "riot." But the shots were fired three days after the riot. The guilty men were getting more and more twisted up in their own lies. Mr. Guthrie had to make a statement in the House of Commons. He admitted that eleven shots were fired at Buck. He gave no explanation. We again declared the government responsible. No underling would initiate such a thing.

Tim was now to be tried for "rioting." I went to Kingston to look after the trial. The first day I was alone in the court. In the evening, I wired Beckie Buhay to come and to bring Alice Buck along. The next day Tim entered and there we were; Alice, Beckie, a representative of *The Worker* and myself all seated in front ready to greet him, our beloved friend and leader. We saw a sight we will never forget. Tim entered the court manacled hand and foot with the heavy chains of the prison, chains of capitalist hate, surrounded by servile guards armed with heavy loaded rifles. Guards were placed around the building on the lawn. We hailed Tim with cheers and waving hands as he passed. The police rushed at us and ordered silence. The trees clapped their hands and the stones shouted greetings.

Two figures dominated the court room in Kingston. They made the scene one of high significance. The dignified, polite judge, clothed in the robes of his office, seated behind a pon-

derous desk on an elevated place, presented a sharp contrast to the plain man of medium height who stood at the table in his drab blue penitentiary uniform. In my recollection of those days, I see Tim standing there. In the light of the experience of all the years between, I understand a little better the meaning of his stern endurance and of his patient assertions. He was the center of all eyes. There he stood, holding within his personality that wonderful, but secret, power that has been the urge through all the ages in the breasts of such men as he, driving them forward against all obstacles, inspiring them with indomitable faith in final victory.

At the end of the trial, I heard the judge say he "did not believe" many of the statements made by the witnesses of the Crown. I heard him say: "There is much, Mr. Buck, for which you ought to be thanked instead of being persecuted." But he went on to say that he "had to believe that Buck was present at the time of the riot." And the law of the land was that if "one is present at the time of a riot," he is open to a charge of rioting. Hence he declared "I have to find you guilty of rioting."

The judge imposed a sentence of nine months to be added to the other sentence of five years. At the moment it was a hard blow to us. We had hoped for a clearance; our opponents had hoped for a heavy sentence of many years.

Tim's first conviction, together with his comrades, under Section 98, had brought in its train a flurry of new attacks on labor all across the country, and now this new conviction brought new attacks. In 1931 there had been 720 arrests and 155 convictions. In 1932 there were 839 arrests and over 200 convictions with sentences totalling 115 years of imprisonment.

During these years Montreal was the scene of some of the greatest struggles. In the federal elections Simard had been the party candidate in a Montreal riding. All of his election litera-

ture was seized and destroyed by the police. His committee rooms were raided and smashed. The offices of our French paper, *L'Ouvrier Canadien*, were raided and the editor, Dubois, was arrested. Other workers active in the campaign were arrested. I offered what active help I could in the effort to fight back against this repression, but the paper was suppressed and put out of business.

Nick Zynchuk was an unemployed Montreal worker. He had been evicted from his home. When he turned to walk up the stairs of his house, Zappa of the "Red Squad" drew his pistol and shot him dead. "I did it because I was mad. He was only a Communist," said Zappa. The funeral was a demonstration of twenty thousand enraged workers. French-speaking and English-speaking and foreign-born workers marched together, symbolic of the greater unity of the future. The police charged the procession over and over again, but the angry people could not be turned back. They marched right to the graveside to honor one of labor's martyrs.

Joe Derry of the Young Communist League in Toronto and Arthur Evans at Princeton, British Columbia, were charged under Section 98. Ron Stewart, a sailor in the Canadian navy, was arrested at Victoria, charged with "inciting to mutiny" and sentenced to two years in prison. Arvo Vaara, editor of the Finnish daily *Vapaus*, together with Danny Holmes of Winnipeg, a Ukrainian leader and eight other leaders of the foreign-born workers in Canada, were kidnapped and deported. Urho Jaaska, lumber workers' leader in Port Arthur, was clubbed to death by police in their attack on an unemployed parade. Some twenty-three Arborg farmers were arrested for resisting eviction. A vast array of armed force was brought against the striking workers of Anyox, British Columbia.

In May 1932 ten workers, leaders of large bodies of foreign-born Canadians, were snatched up by the R.C.M.P., kidnapped,

rushed by train and motor car from all parts of Canada to Halifax for speedy deportation. By mass pressure we stopped the proceedings. For a whole year the men were held in Halifax while we fought to save them from almost certain death at the hands of fascist governments in their homelands. But finally they were deported. Hans Kist was one of them. He was deported to Germany. He was thrown into a Nazi concentration camp. His Nazi tormentors believed he was withholding some information of value to them and applied torture to make him talk. They dropped heavy weights on his legs. He died of the torture.

Later, when Tom Cacic, one of The Eight, was being deported to fascist-controlled Yugoslavia, our friends in England managed to arrange his escape. It saved his life.

Economic turmoil was abroad over all the earth. The foundations of the capitalist system were crumbling. The schemes of fascism were spreading. Everywhere, outside the Soviet Union, the numbers of the masses of unemployed were increasing. Over 1,000,000 Canadian workers were now unemployed. These militant workers were boldly organizing their strength to defend their rights. On March 6, international day of protest against unemployment, great mass rallies were held across Canada. In Montreal, 15,000 demonstrated in spite of the violent attacks of the police. The left-wing trade union movement was slowly marshalling its forces. These things made it very difficult for Mr. Bennett to find happiness.

The big show of his regime was the Imperial Economic Conference which was convened in 1932. Representative statesmen came from every part of the British Empire. Stanley Baldwin Premier of Britain, graced the assembly with his presence. While it lasted it was a stupendous affair. But it vanished into the misty past. *Nihil ex nihilo.*

At one of our conferences with leading unionists and repre-

sentatives of the unemployed movement, the proposal was made: "Let us organize a Workers' Economic Conference which will discuss and put forward real proposals for a way out of unemployment and crisis." Everyone endorsed the idea. It was decided that our Defense League should initiate the conference. I sent out the call across the country, and I went to Ottawa to make the preliminary arrangements.

It was summer time. The delegates poured into Ottawa travelling every way, but mostly by freight. I know of two young women who came by freight all the way from Vancouver to attend this conference. Registered delegates numbered 600 and those who did not reach Ottawa because of police interference numbered twice that figure.

I heard of an incident which occurred one night on the C.P.R. just west of Nipigon. There was a desolate spot along there at which the R.C.M.P. used to stop freight trains to throw off the "passengers." It was a long tramp to get anywhere from there.

This night the train suddenly stops. The car door is thrown open. A loud voice shouts: "Everybody out." There are over thirty men in the car. No one moves. "Everybody out," comes the voice once more. At last someone replies: "Who says so?" The stern order is shouted once more. "Well," says the passenger, "I guess we learned how to fight over in France. If anybody wants to try to put us out, let him come on." The train moves on with the men still aboard. They are world war veterans on their way to the conference.

Unbaffled by the hostility of the Ottawa city council, our Ottawa committee had secured the use of an old garage for the Workers' Economic Conference. They seated the center portion with planks. The space around by the wall for about eight feet was covered with shavings on which were placed tarpaulin covers. This furnished sleeping accommodation for

hundreds of the delegates during the two days' sessions. A few blocks away was the Ukrainian Labor Temple. Here meals were prepared and served, cooked on ranges made of large sheets of iron placed on the ends of iron pipes driven into the ground. Under these sheets were roaring fires whose heat cooked the food. The food was good. Every meal was a summer picnic. The weather was ideal.

Our demonstration was staged in the city park near the Parliament Building where the Imperial Conference was meeting. We flocked to the campus in the afternoon with banners and slogans. It was quite unusual for staid Ottawa. The police were angry and chased us around. Fourteen delegates, two of them women, were arrested. One policeman had to be taken to the hospital. I went to the police chief to press for the release of our people, especially the women. We met flat refusal. The next day all were dismissed in court except one worker who was arbitrarily accused of striking the sick policeman. He got two months.

Dan Malone was also under arrest. A grand plan had been hatched in the official brain to discredit our conference. Dan was charged with plotting to assassinate J. H. Thomas, visiting British labor renegade and cabinet minister. Dan was an Irish-Canadian worker, a Socialist. Our Defense League smashed this frame-up. Then the authorities commenced deportation proceedings against him. This attempt, too, was defeated.

Bennett agreed to receive a delegation from our conference, provided "no one on it was a Communist." Jim MacLachlan of Cape Breton, assisted by George Harris, led the delegation of ten. Ewart Humphreys, militant leader from York Township, was there. Mr. Bennett's condition was not fulfilled.

What with our monster Workers' Economic Conference in the old garage and our demonstration in the park, followed by our solidarity in the police court trial, we captured the front

pages of the Ottawa press for over two days. We crowded out the empire economic big shots. Theirs was an empty show. But our conference throbbed with vitality. We worked out a real program. We proposed to lift the burden of the crisis from the backs of the working people. We called for unemployment insurance, a raise in wages, increased taxation of the millionaires, a shorter work-week, a curb on the power of the trusts and a great national program to clear the slums and build homes, hospitals and schools. This was a living program, based on the real needs of the people.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

I Lived to See the Dawn

ON OCTOBER 20, 1932—my sixty-first birthday—I embarked in Montreal on the good ship *Aurania* bound for Moscow as a delegate to the First World Congress of the International Red Aid. I walked the deck in a state of high emotion trying to realize the measure of the task to which I had set myself. It was the first time in my life I had set foot upon an ocean liner. I was filled with the awe of a boy although I made every effort to conceal this from my friends.

We swept along down the St. Lawrence River. Then, suddenly, we were away out upon the deep Atlantic. I gazed and gazed at the wide sweep of the waters. There came a moderate storm. I stood for hours watching the roll of the waves. I proved to be a good sailor.

I was accompanied by three other delegates. Fred Hackett of the seamen's union, W. S. D. St. Pierre of the Vancouver Defense League and Beckie Buhay. By happy coincidence we were together on the same boat with the Workers' Delegation to the Soviet Union, on their way to make an informative tour of the new Socialist Land. They were being sent by the "Friends of the Soviet Union," and there were six members: J. F. White, journalist, Toronto; Stanley Hood, plasterer, Toronto; Harry Guralnick, journalist, Toronto; Jim Busby, lumber worker, Fort Francis; Sam Patterson, coal miner from the

Crow's Nest Pass; Jim Brown, shipbuilder, Vancouver. I still have a group photo of the ten of us taken on the fo'c'sle-head away out at sea.

Fred quickly got acquainted with some of the crew. We had some friendly meetings with them. They told us of some chap on board in custody, being deported to England. We soon learned it was our friend who had been jailed in Ottawa. We persuaded the captain to release him. We developed wide discussions among the passengers about his case with the result that he left the ship much better fixed financially than when he had come aboard.

There was much enjoyment on the trip. We developed our sense of comradeship as we conversed from day to day. Not all of our group could boast, as I did, that they never missed a meal. I had helpfully given them some sea-sick remedy my doctor had given me before I left home. They vowed my medicine was worse than their sea-sickness. Our delegations separated at Plymouth. We landed and went by fast train to London where we stayed for a few days. I visited the grave of Karl Marx at Highgate Cemetery. I stood in silence before this humble plot of earth marked by the greatest name in modern history. With clenched fist raised I renewed my devotion to his cause.

From London to Moscow the journey is over a well-beaten pathway. We found ourselves part of a stream of human traffic sweeping along — engineers, medical doctors, teachers, clergymen, scientists, tradesmen, builders, social workers, specialists — all eagerly bent on reaching the Soviet by sea, by land and by air. Our route lay overland through Germany. We left London for Hamburg.

Everywhere in Germany political strife of the fiercest sort was raging. The Communists were fighting with all their strength to save Germany and the world from the Nazis, but German labor's ranks were weakened and split in this battle

by the stand of the Social Democrats. In Hamburg, rival flags of the hammer and sickle and the swastika bedecked the streets for miles from thousands of windows and house fronts. A violent battle took place in the night on a street close to our hotel. I had gone for a late stroll before turning in to bed. I heard the first shots and saw men running and shouting down the street. I quickly took cover and made my way back to my hotel. One man was killed and many wounded. It was not difficult to predict a worsening of the situation in the near future. We made a lengthy visit in Berlin, where the International Red Aid had a headquarters. We held long discussions with the German leaders on their situation. They were fully aware of the impending catastrophe and were fighting hard. German Big Business and world capitalism were throwing their power behind Hitler. Not many months later, over the prostrate body of the German working class, he came to power.

Seated on the wooden benches, eating, sleeping, chatting the time away, we travelled all night across Germany and the Baltic states. Finally, the moment came. The guard shouted: "Crossing the Soviet border." Tears of joy, which I could not repress, streamed down my face. I said to Fred: "It overwhelms me to realize that I have lived to the day when my old eyes shall see the Land of Socialism."

I will never forget that moment. It was at that moment I had a new sense of the purpose of my life. I had a new comprehension of the purpose of the universe. The Soviet Union, in abolishing, once and for all, the exploitation of man by man, has advanced the well-being of modern human society to a greater degree than any other single event in history.

When the train came to a stop in the early morning we were just over the border line. I do not recall the name of the city, but I do vividly recall my first encounter with the Soviet customs official.

I shoved my grips onto the counter. The official, speaking English, asked me: "What is your purpose in coming here?" I told him I was a member of a delegation from Canada to the International Red Aid Congress in Moscow. He reached for my hand, exclaiming "Tovarish!" He folded up my luggage.

"Come this way," he cried.

"But there are four of us," I said.

"Bring them all with you and come with me," he ordered.

The slogan "Workers of the World, Unite!" was inscribed on the four walls of the large room in Russian, French, German and English. As a welcoming slogan, no other government on earth has such words of internationalism to greet the newcomer. Imagine our surprise and delight when the official conducted us aboard what was the equal of a Pullman compartment sleeper, and deposited our luggage in a compartment of shining mahogany and brass. "This car was formerly one of the 'specials' kept for the use of the nobility," he said. Thus we travelled over the wide-flung Soviet domain for hundreds of miles to the famous city of Moscow.

On arrival we were taken by special bus to the Hotel Miak which was only a few minutes walk from the congress hall. In the hotel we were greeted by friends from England and by the delegation from the U.S.A. headed by our old friend, Louis Engdahl. Our Russian comrades joined us as we sat down to enjoy some Miak coffee.

I was a stranger in this new world. But because of the spirit of reality and sincerity which was apparent in everyone I met, I never had any sense of strangeness. I never felt ill-at-ease because of my deficiencies. From first to last I felt completely one with the people I met in committees, in conferences, in social affairs. I, a Canadian, had come thousands of miles across land and sea and I had found men and women with kindred

hearts and minds. These days cemented our comradeship. I was in Moscow.

I stood on the Red Square on November 7, 1932. There was a joyous throng of over 200,000 people assembled. We were there to celebrate the new political phenomenon, a Workers' State. My whole being throbbed with warm emotion. I stood in front of the Arcades Building, right across the square from Lenin's Mausoleum. I could see clearly the faces of the leaders on the balustrade. The first was Joseph Stalin and beside him stood President Kalinin. Lunacharsky was there and Dimitri Manuilski and Madame Stassova, leader of the I.R.A. and George Dimitroff of Bulgaria and Wilhelm Pieck of Germany.

The clock in the ancient tower struck. The huge gates in the South Wall of the Kremlin swung open and out dashed upon the square mounted officers of the Red Army, led by Marshal Voroshilov. The band of 100 pieces struck up *The Internationale* and the vast throng saluted with uncovered heads.

Voroshilov was the orator of the day. I heard his voice sweeping over the whole square distributed by loudspeakers. My interpreter relayed the words to me. "The boundaries of the Soviet Union are sacred. They belong to the workers and we will defend them. We do not covet one hand's breadth of any nation's territory, and we will not surrender one inch of our own. If the imperialists make war upon us, they will discover that we are past-masters at ending wars."

I saw the pageant of the armed workers. I saw them coming through the North Gate, four groups of massed flags leading the four columns of armed workers. In their garb of toil from shop and mill, from railroad and mines, on every man's right shoulder a rifle. They marched along to the massed music, they marched amid the laughter and cheers, the shouts and tears of the multitude.

There were over a million men in those four columns that

day. At any hour of the day or night, 750,000 armed workers can be assembled in the space of 45 minutes on the Red Square to defend the city. Anyone who doubts that the working class holds real power in the Soviet Union should have been with me that day. The evening shadows were beginning to gather when the vast throng dispersed. And I was told by a friend that a witty member of the diplomatic corps who witnessed the demonstration wired his home government this laconic piece of advice: "Don't fool around with the Soviet."

The Soviet Union, it is true, has a policy which embraces the earth. But, unlike the capitalist imperialists, it is not a scheme to exploit the backward countries and to rob them of their resources; it is not a warlike plan to conquer by force weaker people, and to impose slavery and poverty upon them. The Soviet policy is one of freedom and self-determination for all people, knowing nothing of anti-Semitism or color-bars. It is a genuine "good neighbor" policy that will help to bring release from bondage and poverty, to enlighten the minds of the people, to bring culture and science, to heal the sick, to feed the hungry. In a word — it is the policy of communism.

The formal public opening of our great congress took place the night of November 9 in the Bolshoi Theater, with its six galleries crowded to capacity by the citizens of Moscow.

Next morning our business sessions opened in the Palace of the Trade Unions. The moment we entered our merry chatter of conversation ceased as we beheld the great hall. Delegates from over seventy countries were assembled there. It was a most inspiring sight. In all history there had never before been a gathering such as this. All races united in this meeting in a deep class bond of struggle against the suppression and terror of world capitalism. Helen Stassova, one of the Old Bolsheviks, a life-long friend of Lenin, leader of the I.R.A. from its inception, submitted the main report to the congress. She re-

ported 14,000,000 members in seventy countries. In the period of six years from 1925 to 1931 over 3,000,000 workers had been killed by capitalist terror. In the first ten months of 1932 over 1,000,000 workers had perished in the class struggle. She outlined the great international campaigns conducted in Europe and also in the United States, including the Scottsboro campaign which prevented the legal lynching of eight Negro boys. The I.R.A. would continue to lead the fight against the terror. The struggle for democracy and peace would end in the defeat of capitalism.

We heard reports of Chiang Kai-shek's brutal massacre of workers in China, the terror in fascist Italy and in Pilsudski's Poland.

One of the highlights of the fifteen-day congress was when André Marty of France stood on the tribune. He had been an officer in a squadron of the French navy in October 1917, standing off the Port of Odessa on the Black Sea. When the Bolsheviks took over the city and proceeded to man the Soviet ships in the harbor, the French admiral decided to stop them. He ordered his ships to open fire on the Russian workers. It was André Marty who refused to give the order. He called the crew to halt and refuse to shoot down the workers of Odessa, fighting for freedom. He and the crew were put in irons and taken to France for trial. He saved the Soviet in Odessa. We hailed him with acclaim. He asked the question: "What are the capitalists fighting for over all the earth?" What is the purpose of all this terror? It is to retain power and to keep their place of dominance over the working class. It is to uphold the system of unhindered exploitation of the workers for the profits of a few rich exploiters.

Moscow stands out as the first Socialist city in the first Socialist State ever to exist among men. Marxian democracy is successfully demonstrating its effectiveness in answering the long

quest of man for an economic basis for Brotherhood. The light from this city, "set on a hill," encircles the world, and arrests the eyes of the masses of oppressed peoples in every zone. Communism has kindled a light which will never be extinguished.

I visited the new workers' apartment blocks. I visited the Moscow University, the center of the great new system of scientific learning for the working class that extends all over this land. I inspected the vast municipal reconstruction projects. I saw on every hand the material evidence that the first stage of communism has already been achieved. This is the stage called socialism in which the ruling principle is: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his work." I saw everywhere the material evidence that the goal of the Soviet government is now to advance to the next stage, the stage of communism, when the rule guiding society will be: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need."

It has, contrary to the propaganda of our enemies, established the concept of this great objective in the minds of most people in the U.S.S.R. This joyful transformation of human society can be brought about only through the widest cultural and political education, based upon rearing the younger generation in the spirit of collectivism. Two parallel courses had to be maintained: the raising of the cultural level of the whole population and the creation of a new cultural atmosphere opposed to that of decaying capitalism. However, only when the hostile capitalist encirclement has changed will it be possible for the Soviet workers' state gradually to wither away.

Another highlight of the congress was the address given by D. Z. Manuilski, Professor of Moscow University. This brilliant Soviet leader is now the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Republic of the Ukraine. He addressed our gathering as a representative of the Soviet government and as one

of the leading men of the Soviet Communist party. The main theme of his speech dealt with the question: "What is socialism in the Soviet Union?"

We visited Moscow factories, became acquainted with the trade union leaders, spoke to many workers, attended factory meetings. It was an education in the power of a socialist working class.

I had the opportunity of visiting a prison which was reputed to be the most severely conducted of its kind in all Russia. It was called the "Isolator" and had accommodation for about 700 inmates. What a contrast to our Canadian prison system!

The principal object in the Soviet in dealing with crime and criminals is to seek a remedy without punishment, if possible. This is the very reverse of capitalist practice where we have punishment without remedy. This is perhaps "realistic" in a sordid sense. There is no remedy for crime under capitalism. One of the signs of its decay is the alarming growth of crime, especially among the youth.

Two demands faced everyone who entered the "Isolator" as an inmate. He had to work and he must study. In fulfilling these demands he was given every assistance and facility.

I asked the prison head if crime was on the increase in the Soviet Union.

The answer was: "During the last ten years (1922-1932) we have closed eleven former prisons in the city of Moscow. We are not building prisons but tearing them down. Soon we will have no need for such institutions."

Our delegation spent several days in a delightful visit to Tiflis, the capital of Georgia. Under various auspices, there was a banquet served almost every night for our delegation. This gave us a splendid opportunity to meet with a large number of people. The men and women who honored us with their company were people of experience in the long years of revolu-

tionary struggle for freedom. They had suffered and sacrificed. They were triumphant class-conscious workers who had won a standing place on the wide plains of the Socialist Land.

We had the pleasure of meeting the President of the Georgian Republic, Michael Moharadzy. We were shown into a large room. As the President entered, we stood to greet him, expecting some very official sort of person. Our experience in meeting government heads had been confined to that kind. But here was a working man, a railway engineer. "Greetings, friends," he said as he came into the room, offering his hand to each one. This President spoke to us, giving the factual story of the amazing development of Trans-Caucasia under socialism.

I also visited the Armenian Republic. It was a bright day of December sunshine as we moved along in these sub-tropical regions of the mid-continent. Pointing with his hand away across the landscape, our guide said to me: "Do you see that high mountain peak away yonder? That is Mount Ararat where, legend says, the Ark of Noah landed after the great flood."

The traditions of this wonderful country of Armenia reach back to the story of Noah's Ark. Armenia existed as an independent state for many centuries under the rule of the Kings of Haik, who were supposed to be the descendants of Noah. This was the first state in the world to be called "Christian." As recently as the days of the first Great War the Turks had organized massacres to exterminate these sturdy people.

I asked the vice-president of the Armenian Soviet: "How long has Christianity been established in Armenia?" The answer was 1600 years. But the salvation of the Armenian people came in November 1920 when the Soviet state was established. Armenia was a good example of what rapid development was possible once Soviet power was achieved in a backward coun-

try which had been terrorized previously by the Czar and by the Turks. In twelve years of socialism there had been more accomplished for the peace and progress of the people than had been even attempted in the many centuries of the past.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

“The Truth Is No Defense”

UPON MY RETURN to Canada, I took up the work in connection with Tim's trial, and threw myself with renewed vigor into the campaign for the release of the eight Communist leaders. There were three outstanding demands; first, a full investigation into the attempted murder of Tim Buck; second, the release of The Eight; and third, the repeal of Section 98.

Hundreds of public meetings and delegate conferences were called by city and provincial committees. Hundreds of workers became living champions of freedom. Over 50,000 took part in this campaign. The high point came in the national conference in Ottawa in the fall of 1933.

Five hundred thousand pamphlets and leaflets were issued and distributed across Canada. Tens of thousands of printed postcards addressed to the Minister of Justice were circulated, signed and sent to Ottawa. Mr. Guthrie told me one day he had a large box filled with these terrible postcards.

Said he: “You threatened my life.” Our demand for justice frightened him.

Delegations were organized to appear before city councils, provincial governments, church bodies and at mass meetings, pressing these demands.

Ottawa, February 14, 1933: The scene is the House of Commons, Hon. Hugh Guthrie, Minister of Justice, declares that

telegrams have come flooding into the Department of Justice asking the release of the eight Communists. J. S. Woodsworth, M.P., is sponsoring a bill to repeal Section 98. In the course of his speech, Mr. Woodsworth mentions the imprisoned Communists. "These men were convicted of no criminal act," says Woodsworth. He recites a resolution from the conference of the United Church, which called for the repeal of Section 98.

Now Guthrie speaks again. He talks about the C.L.D.L. more than about Section 98. He says falsely that the League began its activities only after the Communist party had been declared an illegal organization in 1931. He declares he knows that the C.L.D.L. and the Communist party have their affiliations outside of Canada. "I know that from the telegrams which I have received threatening myself. I have been told that 150,000 Communists in New York are watching me and I forget how many in Chicago. Let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, that throughout Canada the Labor Defense League is operating today in a most insidious manner. I hear of it through petitions from every quarter of the Dominion. I have thousands and thousands of them."

Hon. Ernest Lapointe, former Minister of Justice, then pointed out that repeal of Section 98 had been adopted five times by the House of Commons and five times vetoed by the senate.

Mr. Guthrie finally moved the usual six months' hoist for the Woodsworth bill. He tried to spread alarm by saying: "There is unrest in Canada today of a very serious nature. We know there are a number of very dangerous organizations operating throughout the length and breadth of Canada today." Mr. Woodsworth, as the sponsor of the bill, spoke in conclusion. He advanced the suggestion that: "There are other sections of the Criminal Code which could be employed to

meet the circumstances of men advocating force and under which they, if they are foreigners, could be deported."

This method of suggesting a program to a Tory government stripped Mr. Woodsworth's stand of all value. If other clauses could be used, these should have been included in the repeal bill. Later that same year Mr. Woodsworth became leader of the new C.C.F. party. Perhaps this idea of suggesting "other ways" to capitalism illustrates the role of social-reformism in our present-day society.

In November 1933 came the celebrated occasion when a delegation of seventeen named by the national conference visited Ottawa and was accorded an interview with Premier Bennett and other members of his cabinet.

We found ourselves seats as best we could. The first remark was a gruff voice saying: "Well, Smith, what do you want?" So surprising to be met in this fashion by an old friend, don't you know! I explained the situation. We were a delegation from a conference representing over 200,000 people. We carried a petition with 459,000 signatures demanding an investigation into the shooting at Tim Buck and the repeal of Section 98.

"Where do you get the money to bring a delegation like this to Ottawa?" was one outburst from the premier. I replied that it did cost a goodly sum. He declined to contribute to our expenses.

Then arose the big man with his stiff back and bent upon us his stern countenance and this is the meaning of what he said: "There will be no investigation into the shooting. There will be no repeal of Section 98. It is needed on the statute books. And finally (pounding the desk with clenched fist and with face suffused with rage) there will be no release for these men. They will serve every last five minutes of their sentences. That's all there is to be said! Now get out!"

"Just one more word, Mr. Bennett," I said. "That may be your decree now, but by the time the workers and farmers of Canada are through with this, you may have to change your opinion."

Within nine months of that day, all were released.

* * *

One day near the end of January 1934 the secretary in my office called me at a downtown hotel where I was visiting my old friend Mayor Curtis of Sioux Lookout.

"Have you seen the headlines in the *Star*? You are indicted for sedition."

This was quite startling news for me. I went out and bought a paper and read for the first time of the action of the grand jury—which met in secret without having taken any evidence in open, public court—and displayed its subservience to Tory reaction by bringing down this vengeful charge.

I had spoken at a meeting in Hygeia Hall on January 17. I told the story of our delegation to Mr. Bennett on the shooting of Tim Buck. I told how Mr. Bennett received us and what he said. I charged his government with responsibility for this attempted assassination of the leader of the Communist party. Detectives Nursey and Mann had given a report of my speech. Somewhere a decision had been made to charge me with sedition. It was an attempt to silence our campaign. The "Red Squad" had deliberately distorted my words. Apparently with an eye to the sedition charge, they quoted me as saying that Mr. Bennett personally arranged the shooting.

This public meeting had been called to make a protest against an action of the Henry Provincial Government. They had threatened the Strand Theater people on Spadina Avenue with loss of their license if they permitted a second performance of a play called "Eight Men Speak." The play had brought out an overflow crowd. Strong demands were made for a re-

peat performance. In the meantime the police commission in Toronto, in its supreme wisdom, asked the "Red Squad" to make a report on the character of the play. With qualifications that would not enable them to examine a horse's mouth, these new-found drama critics handed in a report saying the play should be banned.

Later on in March the truth definitely came out that Mr. Bennett had received a copy of this play through the R.C.M.P., and had made no effort to keep the Toronto authorities from knowing how indignant he was to think that they would permit it to be staged. The ukase addressed to the theater owner was the result. So the Progressive Arts Club was denied the use of the theater.

But the personal role of Mr. Bennett did not stop there. The unfolding of events left no doubt of his influence in my indictment. In my trial the most elaborate denials were forthcoming from Crown and bench of the personal role of the Prime Minister in the matter. However, Attorney-General Price denied initiating the proceedings. The press referred to the "somewhat transparent obscurity" of the instigator of the trial. In a matter of days no one but a fool could believe that such a trial would be launched without the initiative or at least the full approval of the Prime Minister. His interests were too completely involved.

Judge Kingstone in charging the grand jury had stated that no defense could be established by proof of the truth of my seditious utterances. He quoted Halsbury: "If the words spoken are seditious; it is no defense that they are true and evidence to prove them true is inadmissible." Thus the ground had been well prepared beforehand for an outrageous frame-up. Peter White, Crown prosecutor, pressed for an immediate, quick trial. I was simply to appear, the detectives were to present the evidence, all discussion of the meaning of my words

was to be ruled out, the jury was to retire and, of course, bring in the required verdict of guilty. This was their hope. How differently it turned out!

Hardly was the ink dry on the indictment than the workers' organizations across Canada roused themselves into action. Protest resolutions and telegrams poured in to the government. Trade unions, church organizations, C.C.F. clubs, expressed their protest. I received hundreds of personal messages of support from the most unexpected quarters. In a month some of the largest mass rallies ever seen in Canadian labor history were taking place. Four hundred delegates attended a united-front conference in Toronto.

The C.C.F. leaders could not stem the tide of united-front sentiment in their own ranks. C.C.F. clubs sent delegates to our defense conferences in spite of the official ban. The leaders were going far to the right. James Simpson, having been elected to the board of control in Toronto, joined with Mayor Stewart in abusing the delegations of unemployed that came before him. The Brownlee Government of Alberta, affiliated to the C.C.F., met the Hunger March of workers and farmers with insults and police violence. At Ottawa the C.C.F. group proposed to amend Section 98 so that it would apply only to "Communist force and violence." They supported Bennett in his attitude to the attempted murder of Buck. Their own followers were indignant. The rank and file of the C.C.F. participated in strike and unemployed struggles. They supported our campaign. The Ontario Labor Section of the C.C.F. refused to obey the official order against assisting in my case. They were expelled. Henceforth affiliated trade unions and the rank and file were deprived of a real voice in the C.C.F.

Speaking at the packed Massey Hall meeting of February 4 I declared: "Tonight I stand before you indicted for sedition because I undertook — and I will continue to undertake — to

press insistently for an open, penetrating inquiry into conditions at Kingston penitentiary where an attempt was made to shoot Tim Buck in cold blood. Mr. Bennett hides behind the dicks who are sitting in this hall tonight trying to catch me in words that can be twisted to their purpose. Who is the great Caesar in Ottawa that he orders the imprisonment of this one and the deportation of that one?

Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world
Like a Colossus, and we petty men
Walk under his huge legs and peep about
To find ourselves dishonorable graves.
. . . Now, in the names of all the gods at once
Upon what meat doth this our Caesar feed
That he is grown so great?

These lines of Shakespeare evoked thunderous applause. They expressed in irony the people's challenge to the Big Shot.

Police shorthand reporters were at the meeting. I repeated all I had said at the Hygeia Hall meeting. I attacked the shameless Abitibi swindle. Members of the Tory government and hangers-on bought up the Abitibi bonds at a low figure just before the government took over the company and paid a high price for the bonds. I dealt with the Beauharnois swindle. I asked why these thieves and swindlers were never brought to court. I spoke of the arrest of one hundred striking lumber workers in Quebec under the corrupt Taschereau Government. Charlie Sims and Beckie Buhay and my old friend, Rev. Ben H. Spence, spoke with me that evening.

I well remember that night. It was the first of our large mass meetings. In Hygeia Hall we had had an attendance of only 400; we had not thought of engaging Massey Hall. But from then on, Massey Hall was too small and the meetings were frequent.

On the 12th of February, I spoke in Windsor, supported by

Aldermen Reg Morris and Tom Raycraft, Nick Huculiak and a host of friends.

On the 15th, the united-front conference assembled in the Labor Temple, Toronto. Over 110 local unions were represented. Several C.C.F. clubs, in defiance of their leaders, were present. Oscar Ryan was in the chair. At this time I had secured a copy of Tim's evidence on the shooting. I quoted it in full, pointing out that this would be prohibited as evidence at my trial. The following week the Toronto District Labor Council protested my indictment and demanded an investigation into the attempt on Buck's life.

On the 18th, the evening before the trial, Massey Hall was packed to the rafters. We linked the protest of this meeting with the fight against the Japanese invasion of China and against the increasingly warlike attacks of Mr. Bennett upon the Soviet Union.

It was just prior to this that the Henry Government had sent troops, armed with a tank, to the city of Stratford to suppress the strike of the furniture workers. The meeting gave a stormy ovation to the message from the Stratford workers and to our message to Premier Henry protesting his action. I told of the wages of twenty cents per hour in the Brandt factory; the working day of twelve and a half hours. I attacked Mr. Woods-worth's signing of the so-called "peace manifesto" with Mr. Bennett and Mr. King as a united front of "corruption and jingoism." I asked whether the C.C.F. leaders were pleased now that the Tories had accepted and acted upon their suggestion that "other clauses" than Section 98 might be used. Lily Himelfarb spoke that night, as did Jerry Flannigan representing the East York Workers' Association.

Next morning the City Hall resembled an armed fortress. More police were on hand than had ever been brought there before at one time. The Crown prosecutor was in a rage. He

had reports of three meetings at which the words complained of in the indictment had been repeated, word for word, by the accused.

Meanwhile the case grew in nation-wide and international significance. Mr. Leo Gallagher, fighting San Francisco lawyer, had been sent to help us by the International Red Aid. He had just returned from the Dimitroff Reichstag trial in Leipzig, Germany. There he had seen George Dimitroff turn his Nazi accusers into the accused. The Nazis had tried to keep him out and now he was refused admission to Canada. A storm of protest forced the official hand to lift the ban. The case was attracting wide attention.

"Hon. E. J. McMurray, K.C., former Solicitor-General for Canada, has been retained to defend A. E. Smith"—when this announcement appeared on the front pages of the papers it sent a distinct thrill through the city. We had written to him in Winnipeg, asking him to take the case. He had replied, without delay, agreeing to do so. We had found a lawyer of great skill and wisdom and unfailing courtesy and patience who conducted what proved to be one of the most dramatic political trials in Canadian history and a turning point in the development of labor's struggle.

On Sunday, February 25, another enthusiastic demonstration took place in Massey Hall. It was sponsored by the Workers' Unity League. Sam Scarlett was the chairman. Joe Salsberg was the speaker of the evening. Hundreds of people were turned away after the last seat had been filled.

McMurray dumbfounded the court next day with a demand that Tim Buck be brought from Kingston penitentiary as a material witness. The argument raged for hours as to whether Tim Buck was shot at or not, whether this was permissible evidence, whether the facts brought out in the Kingston trial were pertinent to my case. The Crown was already on the de-

fensive. People were discussing the attempted murder of Tim Buck and asking if a man should go to prison for demanding an investigation of it. The judge granted the order that Tim should come to testify. Then he adjourned the trial for one week.

When the case finally opened on March 5 McMurray launched a motion to quash the indictment. "It discloses no offense," he said. "It does not contain allegations that are seditious. We asked for particulars and all we got was a recital of the definition of sedition."

As I look back now on that political-legal battle in the court, it appears of even greater importance than it did at the time. Of all the laws now used against labor, this sedition law (Section 104) is the most dangerous, the most unjust piece of class legislation. Nowhere is sedition defined in the Criminal Code. To get the definition, the court goes to the record of common law which is simply the summary of judgments handed down over the past hundreds of years. Under these moth-eaten judgments any working-class criticism of the government can be labelled sedition.

In my case, the Crown quoted two pages of words allegedly from a speech I had delivered and, without specifying any particular words or sentences, declared these pages to be seditious. Authorities were quoted to show that "unless there is seditious intent, there is no offense." The answer of the Crown was that the seditious intent was implicit in the words themselves. Mr. White quoted legal authorities to show that seditious intent is any one of the following:

1. To bring into hatred or contempt or to excite disaffection against the King or the government or parliament or the administration of justice.
2. To excite the King's subjects to attempt, otherwise than by lawful means, the alteration of any matter in church or state by law established.

3. To incite any person to commit any crime or breach of the peace.
4. To raise discontent or disaffection among His Majesty's subjects.
5. To promote feelings of ill-will and hostility between different classes of such subjects.

These definitions constituted a gag on the working-class movement. They were a blank cheque against civil rights. It was a matter of the whim of the government or the attorney-general when or where they might be used. From the outset, my trial was a struggle in the court for freedom of speech against the arbitrary attempt of the government to use this iniquitous and antiquated law as a means of crushing justified criticism.

"It does not matter whether Tim Buck was shot at or not," said Mr. White. "This is a simple, ordinary, honest inquiry as to whether these words were spoken, and if spoken with the idea of bringing the administration of justice in Canada into hatred and contempt." On these grounds McMurray's motion to quash the indictment was denied.

Then Detective Nursey appeared on the stand. He produced his original notes of my speech. There were 247 words in all.

"And you say he spoke from 8:20 to about 9:05?" McMurray asked.

"Yes."

"And you say you got it all?"

"I did, sir."

"You say you got all he said, every word of it, in these two sheets (hand-written) that I now show to the jury?"

"I do, sir."

"It didn't take you three minutes to read it to the jury?"

"I don't know how long it took," said Nursey.

Then Detective Mann, another member of the "Red Squad" came on the stand. He brought out his notes. They were written in clear, even handwriting, as one would write sitting at a desk. They were exactly the same as Nursey's. He swore he had

written them right at the meeting, and sitting some distance from Nursey. No jury could believe that.

The drama mounted next day when Tim was to appear. The tremendous public interest aroused in the case put the authorities in a panic. The area around the City Hall was even more heavily policed. The police started pushing and pulling many citizens who came into the vicinity. That afternoon a vigorous demonstration of four thousand citizens was held in Queen's Park protesting the exclusion of the public from the trial and the brutality of the police.

Tim Buck was brought into court in prison garb. The prison pallor showed strongly on his face, but he held himself erect and smiled to all he knew. The jury sat intently watching him through the proceedings.

"Do you remember October 20, 1932?" asked McMurray.

"I remember it well," replied Buck.

"What particularly impressed it on your mind?"

"I was shot at . . ."

White jumped to his feet to object. "That evidence is inadmissible," he yelled. The judge supported him. Here was a trial in which the "truth is no defense." The truth must not be heard. It must not be discussed. It must not be examined. It must not come to the ears of the jury. Such is the vicious law of sedition. Detectives, hired and paid to come on the stand and swear to bare-faced falsehoods; the workers' leader forbidden to speak the truth about an attempt upon his life. Such is capitalist justice!

"I think," concluded the judge, "that the evidence which was to be given in answer to the last question given to the witness is inadmissible evidence." The truth was inadmissible. Tim was led from the court room.

But what did the jury think? Why this elaborate gagging of the truth? Why this fear of what Tim Buck had to say?

What was the full story behind those four clear words that he had spoken before the gag was put on? "I was shot at . . ."

Three witnesses who had been present at Hygeia Hall — Frank Love, of the Progressive Arts Club, a street car conductor and Chester Stokes, a former postman — testified against Nursey's falsified version of my speech.

My own testimony lasted for three hours. Mr. White tried hard to uphold his reputation as a sharp cross-examiner, but his case was crumbling. His own questions defeated him.

"Why did Premier Bennett order you from his office?" he demanded.

"I don't know," I replied. "We presented a petition signed by 459,000 persons asking an investigation of the shooting at Tim Buck. I started to address the gentleman, courteously and properly, but he ordered us out of his office. He said there had not been any shooting at Buck."

"Did you say at Massey Hall that you were charged with sedition solely because you pressed for an investigation into the shooting of Tim Buck?"

"Yes."

"Did you say that the men who shot at Buck were acting on a higher authority?"

"Yes."

"What authority did you mean?"

"The officers above them."

"And above them again?"

"Yes, right up to the federal government."

"Did you say you held the Bennett Government responsible for the shooting of Tim Buck?"

"Yes."

"Did you say they deliberately tried to murder Tim Buck?"

"I said something like that."

"What! You are saying that someone in authority was dia-

bolical enough to murder one or more of these political prisoners?"

"I'm stating facts that were sworn to in court."

"Yes, but things sworn to in court are often not the truth."

"Yes, I've noticed that here, today, myself."

By this time the newspaper reporters were laughing loudly. Mr. White burst into a rage, demanding that the reporters be excluded from the court. On his demand the judge ordered the jury locked up overnight. No newspapers were to be allowed to reach their hands.

"Buck was tried in court in Kingston and found guilty after the riots, wasn't he?" demanded White.

"Yes, that was a frame-up," I replied. "There were 450 men in the riot. It is the height of priestcraft to select one man on whom the law will be enforced."

On March 7 McMurray made his address to the jury. It was a brilliant, liberal speech, dealing with the history of civil rights. He ripped the Crown's evidence to shreds and charged Nursey and Mann with lying. He drew attention to the uniformity of their writing, the dotting of the "i's" and the crossing of the "t's."

"Do you believe they went to that meeting casually?" he asked the jury. "No, these men were detailed off to stifle the outcry for an investigation."

"This is a state trial. This is a political trial. There was no preliminary hearing. This has the air about it of some sort of upper official interference in some shape or form. Man is not like a barrel in which you can put a bung and stop him spouting. A despotic government fears ideas. A nation that suppresses free speech goes to pieces. This is part of the age-old battle for freedom.

"I saw the look of admiration on your faces as the accused stood in the box yesterday. If you convict the prisoner, the

government will be pleased. If you acquit him, you will have the approbation of your own consciences. If that man loses his liberty, it will not be long before you and I and thousands of others lose our liberty." These were a few of his stirring words.

The next morning Chief Justice Rose made his charge to the jury. It was a studied effort to appear fair, while steering the jury to a "guilty" verdict.

"His motive, if he is to be believed, was to induce the government to inquire into certain occurrences in Kingston penitentiary. But if he intended to accomplish his ultimate purpose by bringing into hatred and contempt the government of Canada . . . his intent was seditious. You may come to the conclusion they are words tending to bring into contempt the administration of justice in Canada. If they are, they are seditious. Don't allow yourselves to be swayed by sympathy."

So argued the learned judge in a final effort to persuade the jury to enforce a despotic statute which, by its very nature, was a convenient club to be used by the police power whenever they desired and against whomsoever they might choose.

At 11:55 on the morning of March 8 the jury retired. At 3 p.m. they returned and asked to have read to them my evidence under cross-examination by Mr. White. This took an hour. They retired again. Maude sat in the front row all through the long proceedings, with our daughter, Jean, at her side. Occasionally, as the judge was speaking or the court stenographer was re-reading the evidence, she leaned forward, looking pale and strained. They had been difficult days.

Six hours were required for the jury to make up their minds. During that time I was housed in a cell on the second floor of the City Hall. I rolled my coat up as a pillow and lay down on the wooden bench. I had a very good sleep, much to the astonishment of my jailers. It was after six o'clock when I was taken back to the court room to hear the verdict.

"Not guilty," said the foreman of the jury. His lordship leaned forward in his chair and whispered something to the clerk. The clerk turned to the foreman.

"You say that the prisoner at the bar is not guilty?" he asked.

"Not guilty," repeated the spokesman. The judge stared hard at him for a moment. Then he turned to me.

"You are discharged," he said.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Death Awaited Anyone Who Spoke

OUR VICTORY OVER the charge of sedition caused the movement to surge ahead. The following Sunday, March 11, Massey Hall was filled. An overflow meeting crowded out the Labor Temple and several thousands gathered outside on the street. It was a powerful demonstration against Premier Bennett and his attempt to make it *lèse majesté* to criticize him.

On May Day there was a great parade and 10,000 workers demonstrated in the Coliseum. This mass meeting was, perhaps, one of the most dramatic I have attended. The police commission, after long refusal, was forced to give permission for the meeting. Nursey and Mann, who had gained new notoriety during the trial, came up to the front just when the meeting was about to begin. As they walked toward me, seated on the platform, the crowd came to its feet. The whole Coliseum echoed to the boos of the people. The detectives leaned over and warned me to be careful in what I was going to say. They reeked of whiskey. There was a sharp tension of indignation and a sense of real determination among the people.

Bill Patterson from the I.L.D. in the States had been denied entrance to Canada to speak at this meeting. His appearance on the platform was a dramatic moment. He spoke briefly and had to leave hurriedly to avoid being arrested. He was cheered.

I never spoke to a more enthusiastic audience. I urged the

great crowd to follow up on our victory by a determined fight now to bring about the liberation of The Eight from Kingston.

It was less than six months since Mr. Bennett had shouted at me "these men will serve every last five minutes of their sentences." My acquittal and the temper of the public placed him in an untenable position. He had to yield.

Matthew Popovich and Sam Carr were released on July 6, 1934. John Boychuk, Tom Hill and M. Bruce were released on July 12. Tom McEwen, Secretary of the Workers Unity League, was freed on September 29, just in time to reach Toronto for a mass conference of the C.L.D.L. at which he received a great welcome. He made a speech standing on the roof of a bay-window at Spadina and Queen Streets to a huge crowd of people that blocked traffic. Tim Buck was the last one to be released, on November 24.

This victory was the achievement of the workers of Canada, whose organized pressure forced the Tories to open the prison doors. It was celebrated at a great public assembly in Maple Leaf Gardens, attended by 17,000 people.

The Tory party now faced certain defeat in the approaching elections. In the provincial contest, I ran against Premier Henry in East York. My vote was not large, but our struggle against Tory reaction played a big part in the sweeping out of the die-hards. Mr. Bennett commenced his famous about-face radio speeches. I remember speaking of them at a fine meeting in the Empire Theater in Windsor about the end of January 1935. I spoke of the fact that Mr. Bennett now admitted that the free enterprise system could not function without state planning and state control. I warned against the social-reformist notion that any and all state planning or state control was socialistic. I declared that his planning and control would be that of Big Business; it would lead to the kind of

planning and control instituted by Hitler in Germany. I predicted that world history would see another twenty-five or thirty years of wars and revolutions, ending in the victory of socialism throughout the entire world. Now, ten years later, I think that prediction was fairly accurate.

Those were days of active campaigning and hard work. The unemployed were treated as criminals. The courageous Regina trek brought out the savage violence of Bennett's "iron heel of ruthlessness" in July. Their leaders, Evans, Edwards, Cosgrove, Black, Shaw and others were charged under Section 98. There was a new flood of arrests. Max Farber was sentenced to two years in Kingston. The Noranda strike leaders were imprisoned. James Beatty was sentenced in Winnipeg, Johnson in British Columbia, Haslam and Douglas in Hamilton. We fought the wholesale deportations and helped the arrested miners in Flin Flon and Corbin. We protested the police terror used against the striking longshoremen of Vancouver. We campaigned for the release of Ernst Thaelmann in Germany, Rakosi in Hungary, Tom Mooney in the U.S.A. and Toivo Antikainen in Finland. More and more our Canadian struggle was linked with the world fight against fascism.

In March 1936 I set sail for Europe again. I was bound for Bulgaria, which Henri Barbusse had described as "one great concentration camp." I was one of a delegation of three.

Our chairman was Edward Haskell, son of Rev. D. Haskell, nationally known and much loved American missionary to Bulgaria. The other member was Smeale Voydanoff, President of the Macedonian People's League in the U.S.A. Our purpose was to attend the trial of the Central Committee of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization, and to do everything we could to develop international protest against the terror in Bulgaria.

I made my headquarters in Sofia in the Hotel Slavianska bes-

seda, room 107, when I arrived on March 27. A short distance down the street was the Royal Palace where King Boris lived.

On April 7 I visited the residence of a Mrs. Woodruff. She was an American school teacher. A Mr. A. Toolcheff was there, a representative of the ministry of the interior. He told me the government had been fully advised on the arrival of our delegation. He said the government had received cables and letters from America stating that the purpose of our delegation was to plan the assassination of His Majesty, King Boris, to make a distribution of Communist gold and to launch an uprising. He said that as a result of these letters the government was taking special precautions.

The whole story, of course, was a put-up job. We were advised to flee the country. The next day the agent of the French Line came into my hotel room to warn me to book my return ticket at once and make preparations to leave at the earliest possible moment. I declined to go.

On April 8 we were granted an interview with the minister of the interior. Mr. Haskell stated our purposes. The minister was very courteous and granted us permission to visit the trials and inspect the prisons. Nothing came of his "permission." We learned that such gestures are part of the established technique.

On May the First I marched in the May Day parade through the streets of Sofia. The whole thing was an artificial performance. It was an obligatory parade put on by the government and the police to offset any spontaneous May Day demonstration. Mounted police, armed with rifles, supervised the parade. I learned that the highest rate of wages in Sofia was five cents per hour. A few banners appeared on the street saying something, I was told, about higher wages and peace. I saw the police seize these signs. There was no commotion.

In the square, the lord bishop and others spoke over the loudspeaker, but they never appeared anywhere to be seen by

the people. They were afraid to appear. War was in the offing. Hitler fascism was practically in full control in Bulgaria.

On May 2 at midnight the secret police raided our hotel rooms. They demanded that Haskell turn over the notes he had taken a few days before at a trial of young Communists. Haskell had received the "permission" of the minister of the interior to attend the trial, but now the minister's own police wished to confiscate any notes he had made there. It happened that Haskell had turned his notes over to a young lawyer, a fact which he, naturally, did not make known to the secret police. A few days later the lawyer was caught with the notes and imprisoned.

We were now informed that the trial we had come to witness and in regard to which the minister had promised us every courtesy, had been indefinitely postponed. This was, of course, deliberate. We were learning much. We secured full evidence of the cooperation of the Bulgarian police with the Rumanian, Yugoslav and Greek police against the Macedonian people. The press was under pro-Nazi control. The same was true of the foreign trade of the whole Balkans.

I visited some of the jails. Conditions were very bad. There were over 3000 political prisoners. The government spent less than seven cents per day on each prisoner. Imagine what that would mean!

Riding the bus from one city to another, we passed a great deal of traffic, but it was not the sort one might expect to meet. There were few trucks or automobiles. The number of rickety old farm wagons drawn by scrawny little mongrel nags was most remarkable. The peasants were obviously underfed, poorly clad and overworked. As I look back now, I realize that our North American capitalists were very pleased with those conditions in pre-war, Nazi-dominated Bulgaria. Now that the Bulgarian people have freed themselves and taken over the

land and the factories, our capitalists are very concerned about their "terrible plight."

At the trial of the young Communists, I was horrified to learn of the forms of torture employed by the police. Beating on the feet of the victim, squeezing fingers and testicles with wire mechanisms, inserting needles under fingernails — these methods were repeated until the victim "confessed" or went insane or died. We learned that at the Haskevo trials, one year before, the feet of the leaders were covered with gasoline and lighted. As their feet burned, they were questioned by the police. When they lost consciousness, the fires were extinguished, the victims revived and the ordeal started anew.

In Salonika, Greece, a general strike started at the beginning of May. Sixty workers were shot down in cold blood. My friend Haskell had gone there and he barely managed to avoid arrest and to escape with his life. The People's Front was taking shape in Greece and the other Balkan lands. In Rumania, a broad unity was arising in protest against Anna Pauker's imprisonment. In Zagreb, Yugoslavia, I learned of the united front of the Communists, Social-Democrats and Christian Social parties.

After my visit to the Balkans I returned to the beautiful city of Paris in which I almost felt at home, although my French was something to wonder at. M. Blum, head of the "Front Populaire," was forming his cabinet at this time and I was able to attend one of the rallies being held in Paris to celebrate the victory of the united front. I arrived at the huge hall with some French friends. Only with difficulty could we get near the entrance. People stood in long queues, six or eight abreast, down every street leading to the hall. Finally, to accommodate the crowd, seats on the ground floor were removed and all who could were permitted to enter, filling the place with a standing audience. I managed to get in. I heard André

Marty speak. It brought gladness to me to see the militant victorious masses.

I visited the great cemetery of Paris in which stands the immortal "Wall of the Commune." On the wall was the simple inscription "Aux Morts de la Commune, 21-28 Mai, 1871." I stood at this sacred spot for several minutes with uncovered head while I tried to recollect the scenes that were enacted here some 65 years ago. A few days later I marched with many tens of thousands to celebrate the 65th anniversary of the Commune. We filed past the spot where the Communards were slain.

On June 6 I passed through Dieppe bound for London. Little did I realize that this placid little town would some years hence be the scene of Canadian heroism and death which we Canadians would ever associate with that name. But I did realize that World War II was in the making.

In London I boarded the *Felix Dzerjinsky* for Leningrad. On arriving in Leningrad, after a wonderful voyage, I determined to see as much of the city as possible in my brief visit. It was a beautiful city. I visited the Hermitage Art Gallery. In the Winter Palace, former home of the Czars, I saw the room where Catherine the Great died by poison administered by her own son. I admired the vast achievements of socialist construction. In the prison of Peter and Paul, I saw the cell where Kropotkin had been held. I went to the Smolny, the center of the Socialist Revolution of 1917. There stood a full-sized statue of Lenin in a life-like pose as he had often spoken to the workers at this very spot. I was standing on historic ground.

Lenin — the beloved leader of mankind; the great personality who holds the admiration of the oppressed in all the world! The Communist teacher, whose philosophy and practical

policies have inspired the workers in every nation of the globe — I beg leave to pay my tribute to his great name.

Lenin knew the very hour when to strike for socialist victory in 1917. The German armies were pressing toward Petrograd to take the city. In the face of opposition, Lenin declared the "hour" had come. He persuaded the central committee that a proclamation of power must be sent forth that night. Any further delay would be disastrous. Imagine the scene in the Smolny on that cold November night! These warriors of the masses swaying in tense argument. Then the counsel of Lenin prevailed. They closed their ranks and, standing together, they made the proclamation of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat as the ruling power, based on the soviets of the workers', soldiers' and peasants' deputies.

Lenin died January 21, 1924, at 54 years of age. Historians will try to explain this great man. Not since Marx had the proletarian movement produced such a towering figure. Lenin possessed the virtues of the working class. His name has become the symbol of the new world. His teachings are mightier than atomic bombs.

Arriving in Moscow June 14 I was immediately engaged in conferences with Helen Stassova of the International Red Aid and Vasil Kolaroff of the Bulgarian Communist Party. We took steps at once to appeal to world public opinion on behalf of the people of Bulgaria. On the 19th we held a conference with George Dimitroff at his home. I felt drawn into a natural friendship with him from the moment we arrived. He had a kindly disposition. He had a creative mind and much patience. One of the leading personalities of Europe and of the world, he impressed me with a sense of gentle strength. I spoke to him and Mrs. Dimitroff of our visit to George's mother in Bulgaria and Ed Haskell gave them the photo of her we had brought. He was pleased.

On June 20 the funeral of Maxim Gorki took place. The urn containing his ashes was brought to the Red Square at about 5:30 p.m., where it was placed in a niche in the Kremlin wall.

The death of Maxim Gorki had caused an upheaval of strong emotion in Moscow. Millions of his fellow citizens loved him. Their grief was no mere conventional response. I was one of the hundreds of thousands filling the Red Square in mourning for the great people's writer.

On June 24 I received a cable from Tim Buck in Toronto saying that Section 98 had been repealed by the Canadian parliament. I immediately sat down and wrote an article for *Pravda* on this notable victory in the struggle for democratic liberties.

Twenty years before I had not the faintest notion that I would ever be in Moscow — the capital of the Soviet Union — a well-established, powerful Socialist State now fast approaching a classless society! But here I was and my eyes beheld the fact.

I visited the Park of Culture and Rest. It was about five times as big as High Park, Toronto. But it was not an empty bush. It stretched along the river for over five miles. The shores of the river, all through the city and along the park site, were developed for the use of the people, for boating, bathing and swimming. There were special areas for older folks and for little boys and girls. There was an open-air theater in the park which would seat 20,000. I was there one day when there were 22,000 people in attendance.

There were nurseries for babies and small children. Striking figures of statuary, the product of workers' art, stood in chosen places. There were many "rides" and amusements. We saw people climbing a high tower from which they made the

descent to the ground in a controlled parachute. I declined an invitation to try it.

The marriage laws of the Soviet were based on a sound philosophy and psychology. Marriage was not a sacrament. It was not dependent on the words of a priest. Love and loyalty between husband and wife made a marriage sacred. The husband and wife stood on the same basis of complete equality before the law. There were no prostitutes and no houses of ill-fame. The streets of Moscow, Leningrad, Rostov-on-Don and Baku were empty of street-walkers. Salacious books were not on sale and the movies made no sex appeal on the screen. The divorce courts were not crowded as in America.

There was not a church in Moscow that had been closed because of its religion. There were some that were closed because of their politics. It would be a strange sort of religion that could object to the social program of the Soviet government.

The excessive use of any alcoholic drink was regarded by the Russians as a great enemy of mankind. There was no agency for the popularization of the drinking habit. In the Soviet, the sale of all alcoholic liquor was a monopoly of the government and every place of sale was used to advise the people to refrain from excessive drinking. The traffic was at a minimum. The Russians were a sober people. I have been on the streets of Moscow at all hours and have seen but two cases of drunkenness. In both instances they were taken care of by friends. Socialism will solve the drink problem. Here I saw being realized in practical life the moral precepts that I used to preach from the pulpit.

Naturally, I did not have the opportunity of meeting Joseph Stalin, but I could see and learn how that great leader was regarded by all about him. The capitalist slander that Stalin is a dictator was baseless. The capitalist principle of the "boss"

whose whim is law because he has money was the basis of the fascist one-man dictator set-up. It was foreign to socialism. Stalin was the leader in a collective leadership based on merit and ability. The Soviet was not, in any sense, a totalitarian state. It was the nearest to pure democracy that mankind had ever seen. The basic nucleus of power was in the production unit, in villages in the country, in the office or factory in the city. The high level of political understanding ensured keen watchfulness of measures and of men.

As it stands today, the U.S.S.R. is the first state ever established in the history of mankind based on the Communist principle of production for use and not for personal gain. There exists no private-property interest in the social production of the Soviet. It has created the sole basis for Brotherhood among men.

I had come to the Soviet Union after seeing in the Balkans evidence of the rapid spread of Nazi domination across the continent of Europe. I had seen and learned the horrors of fascist terror. I knew that Europe, outside the Soviet Union, was being transformed into a fascist prison camp, where death awaited anyone who spoke for the people. Now, in the Soviet Union, I knew I was seeing the hope of mankind for salvation from the fascist threat.

I completed my stay in Moscow and, on July 22, I went to the Moscow airport and boarded a large plane for Paris. At the outset I was far from persuaded that this was the best mode of travel for me. My nervous tension was very severe. The plane soared aloft but I could not look out of the window. I was in much distress and for some three or four hours at the beginning I could not feel at ease. Then I began to get control of myself. Afterwards I had great pleasure in every part of that memorable air journey across Europe. I shall never forget the wonderful beauty of the vast panorama that spread before

my eyes as we swept along from one country to another. We passed over some eight different countries. They all looked to be one great land. We sailed along without knowing when we crossed a boundary. It was only when we descended to the earth that we became aware that fascist police were waiting to search luggage and exert their control over a large part of this continent.

In Paris I did as much as I could with the French government to assist the Bulgarian situation. I left Paris for Geneva, where I prepared the petition of our delegation for submission to the League of Nations. We were acting on behalf of the Bulgarian minority in Rumania and the Macedonian minority in Bulgaria. On August 3 we presented our petition to the League.

I was struck by the beauty of Geneva. The lake was beautiful and the buildings were splendid. I visited the place where John Calvin lived and preached. I saw the Plough of Peace, made in Philadelphia, U.S.A. in 1876 from the metal of swords. And upon it rested a pruning hook made from an instrument of war, fulfilling the biblical words regarding the transformation of "Swords into ploughshares, Spears into pruning hooks." But as I stood in those marble halls, I knew that Mussolini had been permitted to overrun Ethiopia and Hitler was seizing Danzig. I knew that powerful interests both in Europe and in America were making millions out of the new war that was developing.

Some insight into these things came through talk with newspaper correspondents at Geneva, Moscow and Paris. They admitted the kind of men who were seated at the council tables. Most of the capitalist statesmen and politicians of Europe were liars and double-crossers.

On August 5 I left for Brussels and spent a good deal of time at the offices of the Second International of Socialist

parties, endeavoring to secure their cooperation in our work. Mr. John Price and Dr. Pollack received us and agreed to distribute our report on the conditions of oppression and terror in the Balkans.

On August 9 I arrived back in London. At Transport House, headquarters of the Labor party, I found no evidence of any real grasp of the critical situation. Only the Communists were seized with the seriousness of the growing fascist threat. I met Harry Pollitt, leader of the British Communists, who was leading the great fight for unity.

London was unique, unlike any other European city. There were many monumental buildings and so many outstanding, historic associations. Its very appearance suggested strength and wealth. It was the capital of a vast empire. The British capitalist class expressed confidence everywhere. It was overconfidence.

Most of the newspapers in London were no better than the Hearst press in America. The most atrocious stories were printed about the Spanish situation. They represented the Spanish government as "reds," as marauders, while they extolled the rebels, the fascists. They were assisting and encouraging fascism. The world conflict was intensifying with Spain as the center at this hour. On July 19 the fascist generals started the war against the democratically elected government of Spain.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

The Pathway Leads Into Battle

MY FIRST TASK on arriving home was to prepare and submit a brief to the new Royal Commission on Prison Reform. Our long campaign had now won all three demands — release of The Eight, repeal of Section 98, and an investigation of the prison system.

Mr. R. Craig, a member of the commission, showed great interest in the Soviet prison system. I answered his questions in great detail on the basis of the first-hand knowledge I had gained in the Soviet Union. We outlined a modest plan of prison reform for Canada but, as far as I can recollect, the only reform made as a result of this royal commission was that each prisoner was to be paid wages at five cents per day. Imagine that!

I embarked on a very extensive series of speaking engagements. My friend, Ed Haskell, took me to Chicago, Gary, Toledo and Detroit. In Canada, I went again through the West, this time in support of the work of the Canadian Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy. A broad, united-front movement was growing, inspired by the struggle of the Spanish people. On this trip, I spoke at a meeting in Nelson, British Columbia, and after the meeting I took a quiet stroll past Trinity church where I preached many years ago.

Returning to Toronto in December, I helped in the civic

election campaign. That was the year of the "break-through." The first Communist alderman was elected on January 1, 1937.

Election day passed and in the evening the returns began to come in. Most of the returns were reported without favorable signs. The committee rooms were closed and the campaign workers and candidates had adjourned to have a cup of coffee and discuss the results. Suddenly, into the cafe rushed a messenger, shouting "Stewart Smith has been elected alderman in Ward Five."

We rushed out of the cafe. The committee rooms were re-opened and soon a crowd of workers filled the place. It was the truth. A Communist school trustee had been elected as well. John Weir gained a seat on the board of education in Ward Four. The working people had succeeded in electing two of their own to seats in the civic bodies.

Toronto has great municipal traditions. The people of this city did themselves the honor of electing as their first mayor the most famous man of his time, who led the forces of freedom that fought the old "Family Compact." That man was William Lyon Mackenzie, who was called the "Little Rebel." He was a great Canadian. We are proud to honor his illustrious name. We are the continuers of his tradition.

Let no one despise the day of small things. From small acorns mighty oaks do grow. The power and organizational strength of the Toronto working-class movement of today have their background in the years of apparently barren work when the outlook seemed hopeless and dark.

I have copies of the very good election platforms of years ago. "The welfare of the working people and small ratepayers, wives and children . . . is our first consideration . . . Slum clearance . . . twenty-five per cent increase in relief in cash . . . Lunches in the schools for the children of working mothers . . . For unemployment insurance . . . Against fascism and war!"

The outstanding feature of civic elections in Toronto for the last twenty years has been the fight of the labor movement for civic progress, led by the left wing. The annual campaigns have made Toronto elections famous. The Labor Representation Political Association was the first method adopted. It was a united-front body, affiliated to the Canadian Labor Party. It nominated candidates for the first time in December 1925. Six names were placed on the ballot for aldermanic honors in Wards Four, Five, Six and Seven, and five candidates for the school board in Wards Five, Six, Seven and Eight. Among the latter, Tim Buck ran in Ward Six; Florence Custance in Ward Eight and I was named in Ward Seven. None of us was elected. In 1926 the L.R.P.A. put up James Simpson for the board of control, with James Birks as a running mate. I was again a candidate with many of the others.

Later, in 1934, I polled 8500 votes for mayor. There was a huge margin against me. But the fact that a Communist could get such a vote in Toronto, the seat of all the hierarchies of dead orthodoxy, shocked some of the high priests into foolish outcries.

The next year Alice Buck received 10,000 votes for the board of control. Tom Cooney was candidate for alderman in Ward One; T. James in Ward Two; A. Hambleton in Ward Eight; M. Klig in Ward Four; Stewart Smith in Ward Five; H. Stephenson in Ward Six. For school board, Anne Smith, H. Bell and J. B. Salsberg were named.

The recorded high in the Toronto Communist vote was reached in 1939 when Tim Buck, as a candidate for the board of control, received over 45,000 votes, just 250 short of election. J. B. Salsberg, (now M.P.P. for St. Andrew riding) was first elected in Ward Four in 1938.

* * *

In July 1936 I left for Spain. I had agreed to act as an

emissary of the "Friends of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion." This was the name given to our Canadian battalion in Spain. William Lyon Mackenzie and Louis Papineau were the fathers of Canadian democracy. How fitting that Canadians should carry their names and traditions into battle against Franco! My mission was to carry out the distribution to our boys of cigarettes, tobacco, soap, socks, first-aid kits, books and other useful and essential articles. I sailed from New York on the *Berengaria* in the company of the American delegation on their way to visit the Lincoln and Washington Battalions. Our shipment amounted to thirty-two tons, valued at \$25,000.

We were delayed in Paris for a short time arranging clearance to Spain. I was kept busy. I spoke at the conference of the Juridical International Association, a body of barristers and leaders in workers' defense. I spoke on the Canadian Constitution.

I visited the convention of the International Peace Committee, headed by Lord Cecil, and participated in the work of the Bureau of Political Refugees from Fascist Countries. At a conference arranged by this bureau were delegates from many countries. We dealt with conditions in Danzig, Ethiopian refugees, the League of Nations conventions dealing with refugees and Spanish refugee children.

I first set foot on Spanish soil at Port Bou on August 3 at about five o'clock in the morning. There were thirteen of us. One young woman came from the Far East, and had been deported from France. Another woman in the party was a lawyer from Czechoslovakia. Two medical doctors were with us, one a German who had escaped only some days before from a Hitler concentration camp. Two were pharmacists. Six were trained nurses on their way to Spanish hospitals. Our

party was in charge of a young Londoner who had been wounded and was returning to the front after recovery.

At noon we arrived at military headquarters at Figueras. At the chateau the commandant welcomed us. As we entered the vault-like rooms, I was surprised to hear my name shouted: "Hello there, Comrade Smith! Where did you come from?" A group of fifty Canadian recruits, busily engaged in filling up their enlistment papers, broke away to greet us. I soon heard names from Montreal, Winnipeg, Toronto — and saw friendly faces I had met in many parts of Canada and the States. On the wall was a roughly painted slogan: *Vive le Tim Buck!* One young chap embarrassed me, so great was his enthusiasm. Here was the force of youth—enlightened youth—dauntless and invincible!

We proceeded to Albacete. We passed through Barcelona and Valencia. Everywhere the war pressed upon us. Trains were crowded to the roofs. The weather was blistering with heat. We grabbed a bite to eat now and then. Our train moved at from four to ten miles an hour.

At Albacete I prepared to visit the hospitals where our Canadian wounded were to be found. This town was the headquarters of the 15th International Brigade of which our Canadian battalion was a part. General Belov was commander. Captain Shellbruck, chief of staff, furnished me with an auto. Bob Kerr of Vancouver, the political commissar of our Canadian battalion, accompanied me on my mission.

As we drove along the highway to Madrid, the peasants were threshing grain in the ancient style with mules tramping it; and then they threw it up into the wind with wooden forks and the wind "bloweth away the chaff." At each road-block I showed my pass, my *Salvo Conducto*. There were large orchards of olive trees, pale green in the bright sunlight.

In Madrid from a high vantage point on August 9th I

looked out at the lines of the fascist armies of invasion directed by and, in large part, composed of German Nazis. I visited the blood transfusion station established by that great Canadian, Dr. Norman Bethune, who was here a pioneer in the efficient ways of life-saving with blood plasma, later used universally in World War II. I visited military hospital No. 15. I saw my comrades from Hamilton and Delhi. In high spirits, they were delighted to get Canadian cigarettes.

At Fuencallar I met Harold Sparks of Toronto in the auto park. The fascist lines were visible from the road. In Albares I spoke at a mass meeting of the men of the Lincoln Battalion. Many Canadians were there, including Thomas Bailey, who sent me a Christmas card from Moose Jaw recently. On the card he wrote: "I remember when you spoke to us at Albares, Spain, before we went to Brunete."

I, too, remember that day. We were in the old stone church built on the highest point in the whole village. Within, the structure was depleted. The furnishings had all been removed. There was nothing left but the walls and the roof. Even the floor had all been taken away. I stood on the improvised platform, beside the commander, in the place where the altar had been, and spoke to the several hundred men present. In all my life, I never spoke in a church with greater feeling or to better purpose. They were all in uniform. They were on a short rest. All looked fit and strong.

At Tarazona we got an enthusiastic reception from the officers and men of the "MacPap" Battalion, as it was nicknamed. Our boys were "in reserve" in this village after seeing some heavy fighting.

These men were unique in history. They represented Canada, the people of Canada. They were part of the first military force ever gathered from countries all over the world to fight for the peoples' cause against fascism and for democracy. The

governments of Canada and Britain and other so-called democracies were aiding Hitler in every way short of actual military assistance, which he did not require. They were to pay dearly for it. We all were to pay dearly for their crime. They professed to attach much importance to elections as a test of democracy, but they were helping to overthrow the democratically elected government of Spain.

I distributed our goods among the boys. It was a heart-warming mission. There was a glow about these men. It was of the inner being. Such people could not be conquered by the brutes of fascism.

I went to nine hospitals to see our wounded men. I looked into their faces, and found there no trace of fear, no bitterness of complaint. I inspected the whole hospital and ambulance service of the International Brigade. It was a wonderful organization. About \$160,000 per month was coming in from many countries throughout the world to finance it. Doctors Magid and Ostrey from Canada were held in very high esteem. In the Jarama offensive of February five doctors were killed and many wounded. They were heroes.

In our car we carried two wounded men to Barcelona. I stayed overnight in army barracks. Next day we were given a room in a large government building on the outskirts. I was taken quite ill for a day or so, but soon recovered my strength. One night the fascists bombed Barcelona and selected our building as a target. I was sleeping when the bombs started coming down. One struck the building some distance from my room. It was a new experience for me. I didn't sleep any more that night.

Next day I met my good friend Leo Gallagher whom I had not seen since he sat near me in the court room in Toronto when we fought the sedition frame-up. Here we were, together again in Spain, fighting another sort of sedition frame-up. He

was accompanied by Mr. Alfred Jacobs of the British Quakers' Committee. I went to Puigcerda to visit their children's colony where a fine work was being done in caring for homeless children.

Our train back to Port Bou was more crowded than usual, if that were possible. I tried to assist a very sick young Englishman who was returning home. At Perpignan we said our last farewells to the representatives of the heroic Spanish people. Larry Ryan joined me in Paris and returned with me to Toronto.

Many of those brave Canadians of the "MacPap" Battalion gave their lives in Spain. After the fall of Barcelona a large contingent returned to Canada, led by Major Ed. Cecil-Smith.

In cities and towns across Canada these veterans were met by enthusiastic crowds. Bill Kardash toured the country, speaking everywhere to large meetings, and in every place winning a stirring response.

In contrast with the people's welcome, the Canadian government's reception was cold and hostile. They did everything possible to make the return of the veterans difficult. On government order they were treated as a "bonded group" by the steamship company, even though they were booked as regular passengers. Friends of Franco controlled the governments of Canada, Britain and the U.S.A. It was not long before they brought the whole world to war and then changed their tune, pretending complete innocence. There would have been no war in Europe in 1939 if Franco had been defeated in Spain in 1936.

Salute to all Canadian veterans of the Spanish war! They fought for Canada in Spain. Their eyes were filled with visions of a happier, better life for all. Today the pathway leads into battle with bitter, ignorant, brutal foes. Tomorrow there will be peace and love and goodwill, and life will be happier. Life

will be better. But this is no time for sad repining or for selfish aims. It is a time for solemn joy and firm determination. We are sowing our lives like seed in the history of man. There will be a harvest and great will be the return. We are on the road to Brotherhood. And we are paying the price for it. The blood of class-conscious workers — their suffering and pain and devotion — this is the price we are paying to the last measure. May the ages judge us, as surely they will!

CHAPTER NINETEEN

Remember Where the Guilt Belongs

HERE I AM, travelling down the old road — from Saskatoon to Regina — that Maude and I travelled thirty-seven years ago. What an abomination capitalism has brought about in this once-rich land. Fifty per cent of the people are on relief. They have extracted billions of dollars of wealth from the land since I first came here. Now they have nothing. They are overwhelmed with a burden of debt of over half a billion dollars, owing to the very class which seized the wealth they produced. It seems such a short time ago that the people took the land, free and rich. That is how capitalism works.

In typical Mackenzie King style, a royal commission is preparing words upon words to find out what is wrong. They have gallivanted about the country at so many thousands per day. Even the provincial government is compelled to exhibit the poverty-stricken condition of the land. It is nothing short of appalling.

Thirty-seven years ago, when I tramped along this road, I did not visualize this day clearly. But I was coming to it. Though very late in coming, very late in perceiving and understanding, I did not miss the light. I did not fail to hear the call. The future will not be easy. But I realize with wonder how closely associated the lives of Maude and myself have been with

the great task by which the whole course of human history is being changed and human Brotherhood, at last, achieved.

* * *

The Municheers were plotting schemes. They purposed to direct the big Nazi war machine against the Soviet Union. That was the real meaning of the "phoney war." That was also the meaning of "little Finland's" war. The western imperialists reared Hitler, Mussolini and Hirohito as their agencies for destroying socialism in the world, but these tools refused to act as tools. They became Frankensteins. They wished to be the masters. We knew the course of events. The rape of Ethiopia. The destruction of freedom in Spain. The betrayal of Albania. The conquest of Manchuria. The scuttling of the League of Nations. The foul political knavery at Munich. The sacrifice of Czechoslovakia. All this was made easy for the fascists by the so-called western powers. In their class hatred of socialism, our imperialists brought the world to this new, terrible war. Only the Soviet could save the world now.

On June 6, 1940, the federal government declared sixteen organizations illegal, among them the Canadian Labor Defense League. As the responsible official of this league during the past fifteen years, I had sought to provide legal defense in the courts for workers arrested for participation in labor activities. Men and women, hounded because they dared to ask for bread or a better living or for freedom of expression, were given some legal aid. Now it had come to this: that the common people, the poor and lowly, would not merely meet with savage repression but would be unable to procure the legal defense that even a murderer is given.

For many years in both public and private capacity I had fought for peace and democracy and against fascism. I opposed those who helped the growth of fascism and who admired its budding strength. There are many words on record, spoken by

myself and others like me. We predicted these tragic events. What now was the course adopted by the reactionaries? They imposed the stigma of "subversion" on loyal men and women, the real anti-fascists. Those to whom the guilt belonged placed it upon the Communists.

With the passing of the War Measures Act our Canadian civil rights had been swept away. Henceforth, any labor leader, any labor organization, any labor paper could be removed at will by the political police. This naked capitalist dictatorship was established by those who criticized the supposed lack of civil rights in the Soviet Union where the workers have been faced by wars of intervention, sabotage and wrecking by foreign imperialist agents from the first day of the revolution.

Leaders of the left-wing labor movement were arrested and placed in internment camps in different parts of Canada. For some weeks and months there was confusion. The number of anti-fascists interned reached the total of 251. Were there no men and women, now, courageous enough to stand up and protest against this destruction of our civil rights? Were we to stand by dumbly and see our Canadian democratic liberties smashed by tyranny?

Once again I undertook to conduct a speaking and organizing tour across the vast breadth of our country to rally the forces of democracy. I was full of life and eagerness to do and to be. Here began a new chapter in the book of life for me.

The first organized effort to bring about the release of the interned anti-fascists was started by the wives of some of the internees — Mrs. Mary Prokop of Winnipeg, together with Mrs. Jacob Penner and Mrs. Andrew Bilecki; Mrs. Jennie Freed of Toronto and others. Soon we organized a broad committee in Toronto and another in Winnipeg. I took up the active leadership of the movement. These devoted and courageous women, with the cooperation of Mrs. Dorise Nielsen,

M.P., and Beckie Buhay, organized trips for individuals to Ottawa and, later on, they made visits to the capital in delegations to seek interviews with the minister of justice and Premier King with a view to securing the release of their husbands. These efforts had a powerful and lasting influence on the whole struggle.

Severe repression was directed against the working class during the period of the "phoney war." Open encouragement was given to the pro-Nazi elements, especially the Ukrainian pro-Nazi organizations which advocated "a joint anti-Soviet war with Hitler," an aim that was openly entertained for a time in our daily press. They were preparing for an anti-Soviet war, not an anti-Nazi war. Crush the workers' organizations! Smash the trade union movement! Destroy the common rights, long enjoyed by the people. Behead the Communist party! This was the program of Canadian Big Business, represented by Mr. Mackenzie King.

The secret police arrested many left-wing trade union leaders. Their list was headed by C. S. Jackson of the United Electrical Workers, Bruce Magnuson of the lumber workers, Harvey Murphy, Charles Murray and others. The right of collective bargaining was virtually abolished by a special order-in-council which ruled out the free ballot in the workers' selection of their bargaining agency.

Properties belonging to the Ukrainian Labor-Farmer Temple Association valued at over \$1,000,000 were confiscated by the government and turned over to the pro-Nazi Ukrainian organizations. To add insult to injury, two hundred fascists who had been interned in the first days of the regulations were released.

When Hitler, on June 22, 1941, launched his attack on the Soviet Union, it meant the hurling of Nazi fury against all that was progressive in human society. It was the fulfilment of

the "original objective" of the Municheers, but under entirely different conditions. They desired this Nazi war under conditions that would leave Hitler in the position of their tool if he won. Now he would be the master of the world. That was why our capitalists were compelled to switch from the "phoney war" to support of the progressive peoples' war against naziism, a genuine war of liberation. Our capitalists did not share the peoples' war aims of liberation and freedom for the peoples. Their war aim was to save their markets and investments, their share in the imperialist domination of the world, from being taken over by Germany.

Our Toronto "Nazis of the soul" joined in the sport of predicting the number of weeks the Red Army would last against Hitler. As the news of Hitler's first deep stabs into Soviet territory came through to us, the world looked dark. I made my prediction in July:

The Soviet Union will never be conquered by Hitler. On the contrary, Hitler is marching to his doom in that vast land. The fires are burning fiercely, but they are fires of refining and purification.

In 1941 I opened a downtown office for the National Committee for Democratic Rights. It was our old location at 331 Bay Street. The new name across the door became well known across Canada in the subsequent months. We moved a table and a couple of chairs into the office. We sat there — Beckie Buhay and I — waiting for the R.C.M.P. to come and dislodge us. At the end of two weeks, still unmolested, we went active. A phone was installed. We bought a mimeo machine. We secured materials. We prepared a short public statement. We called together all who could come of the former labor defense committee. There was a good response. We borrowed some funds — three hundred dollars — an evidence of our faith as well as an evidence of the faith in us possessed by those who gave us the money.

Our Ontario conference for democratic rights met on September 28, 1941, in Toronto. One hundred and sixty-five delegates from twenty-two cities attended, among them fifty-six trade unionists. Twenty important trade union locals were represented. In the report to this conference, later printed as a pamphlet, I called for unconditional unity in the war of liberation against Nazi Germany. I showed that the suppression of democratic rights, the attacks on trade union rights and the internment of anti-fascists ran counter to the interests of the war effort.

It was a wonderful conference. We launched a strong campaign from it. A delegation headed by Rev. F. A. Sayles of Welland left the conference hall to go at once to Ottawa to see Mr. Lapointe, Minister of Justice, on the issue of the Ukrainian halls. At night a crowded meeting cheered the speakers from the conference. Mrs. Jennie Freed, wife of our present outstanding Toronto alderman, told how she and others had hitch-hiked to Hull to see the interned anti-fascists. They were refused admission, but they managed, inadvertently, to see the men as they were being taken from their cells. The men saw them and immediately took up the song, "Hold the Fort for We are Coming," much to the consternation of the guards.

I organized the Massey Hall meeting of November 9, 1941, in celebration of the 24th anniversary of the Soviet Revolution. Two thousand people were turned away. It was a great meeting for war unity. Our slogans, blazoned across the stage, were: "Restore production to defeat Hitler," "Create a Second Front" and "Release all anti-fascists and let them fight Hitler."

Mr. King refused to meet our delegation on November 12. Eighteen of us arrived in Ottawa representing the conference. A lawyer from the department of justice was sent to meet us.

We presented our statement and our brief, and decided upon a renewed campaign.

I travelled back across our great Canadian West, attending conferences and speaking at splendid mass meetings. The response was very encouraging. The N.C.D.R. was established in practically all Canadian cities from Montreal to Victoria. It was now a strong movement of broad committees. Around these committees were gathered many thousands of citizens who gave their support. The N.C.D.R. developed the broadest organized united-front movement achieved in Canada up to this time.

Secret police activity became daily more threatening. Eight internees were released, but far more than eight were spirited away. Tom McEwen and M. Sago in Winnipeg were released by the courts, but were seized by the political police as soon as they turned to walk out the door. The same happened to Charles Weir and others. Bill Walsh was seized by the R.C.M.P. after serving a full sentence in Guelph prison. Gladys McDonald also served a full sentence and was interned — place unknown. There were many others. The appeals of John Weir and others, held behind locked doors by a secret tribunal, fell upon deaf ears.

Our country did not pass through the dark days of Munich without picking up some undesirable baggage. The Tories and the rich supported Hitler and Munich. The left-wing labor movement, led by the Communist party, fought against Munich and for a policy of collective security against fascist aggression. The laws, from the Munich period, outlawing the Communists, had remained to block the path of war unity in the new period of peoples' war against Hitler.

The Chateau Laurier, Ottawa, February 22 and 23, 1942, was the scene of a historic gathering. Delegates from thirty-one cities to the number of 173, representing 140,000 people of

whom 90,000 were trade unionists, met in national conference and presented to the government a program of action. If carried through, this program would have meant an all-out war effort in very short order.

On February 25 our delegation went up to meet Mr. St. Laurent who had, by this time, taken over the justice portfolio. I introduced the delegation to the new minister. Nigel Morgan of the British Columbia lumber workers union presented our statement outlining an all-out war program, our support of a "Yes" vote in the impending referendum on conscription and our demand for the release of the interned anti-fascists. We had the endorsement of the Montreal Trades and Labor Council. Our delegation was accompanied and supported by four members of parliament, Mrs. Dorise Nielsen, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Quelch and Hon. A. W. Roebuck. The minister listened to all that was said, but it was impossible to judge what wheels were turning in his mind.

In my report to the conference I canvassed the whole situation in connection with the war against Hitler. I said:

All true Canadians will take their stand for unity in support of the war measures of the government. We wish to see unity of all classes for the war. . . . There can be no justification for interning people ready to give their lives for Canada.

The conference showed that the forces of unity and democracy were rising anew in the nation. Slowly but surely we were forcing the reactionaries to retreat.

On March 31 Dick Steele was arrested and interned. In Quebec Nazi agents like Paul Bouchard were allowed full liberty, while young men of the caliber of Dick Steele, the steel workers' organizer, were thrown into internment camps. Dick's brother gave his life in Spain. Later, after his release, Dick was able to join the Canadian army. He gave his life on the battlefields of France in 1944. I proudly salute his name and

the names of all Canadian boys who gave their lives to help save the world. In silent humility, bowed with the weight of the deep sense of our indelible debt to them and with undying love for them in our hearts, as Canadians, let us remember where the guilt belongs for this war.

On May 17, 1942, the luxurious trappings of the Royal York Hotel in Toronto witnessed our Ontario conference for civil rights and for total war against Hitler. Hundreds of trade union bodies had now rallied to our banners and had forwarded petitions to the government on behalf of the men interned, seventy-three of whom were at Camp "H," the prison in Hull, Quebec. R. S. Lambert of the Civil Liberties Association and School Trustee Mrs. May Birchard spoke at our conference.

"The men in Hull prison are hostages to appeasement," I declared in my report. "Who are the forces opposing the war offensive and demanding continued suppression of the left-wing labor movement? They are the Quebec corporatists and the Toronto Tories. They both fought to sabotage the 'Yes' vote. They both oppose the Second Front. They both concentrate on spreading Hitler's anti-Communist smokescreen.

"What is interned," I said, "is the spirit of the offensive in the war. Left-wing labor, led by Tim Buck, heads the movement for an all-out war effort and for the Second Front. The Quislings say that the Second Front is only a demand to try to save the Red Army, that it is no concern of Canada, that Canada should remain on the defensive. These arguments now stand in their true light. To say the Communists are agents of a foreign power is to serve Hitler directly, to help him keep his western front safe, to help him blind Canadians to the terrible crisis of this hour in our national history."

We sent a delegation before the special parliamentary committee on civil rights. That was on June 9. We submitted a

very full review of the internment cases and the suppressive orders-in-council. Our delegation was very representative.

As our movement gained greater and greater strength, Mr. St. Laurent shifted his ground. Originally, the ground for internment was laid down as opposition to the war. Now, the minister and his friends justified the continuation of the ban and the internments by trotting out the old story that the Communists stood for "force and violence." Section 98 had been repealed but its spirit still haunted Parliament Hill.

On July 5 we called together an emergency conference in the Royal York. There were 204 delegates assembled. A few days prior to this, great public indignation was aroused by the arrest for internment of J. B. Salsberg and Joe Gershman. The conference was charged with a feeling of strong determination.

"The growing war unity in the nation," I declared in my keynote address to the conference, "has passed over and beyond this ban and made it a farce."

"But despite this ban, and even under its stifling effects, every Communist and left-wing worker in Canada has done and is doing his duty. The Communists have risen above this ban to serve Canada. Production councils are the result of their work. Practically alone, they have brought to our war effort that sense of urgency that is so desperately needed now. They are showing the way out in Quebec. They laid the foundation for the two cardinal principles of our nation's policy in the people's war: first, friendship and alliance with the Soviet Union and, second, recognition of fascism and the fascist axis as the real enemy of the people of the world. Every influence was thrown against these principles advanced by the Communists. Yet these have emerged today as the only basis of our national survival.

"Hitler and Mussolini and their friends concentrated a lot of attention on developing their political warfare in Canada.

The Communist ban is their chief foothold. Duplessis' padlock law, the propaganda of the Vichy agents, the slander that the Communists are agents of a foreign power — these are as much a part of Hitler's war-machine as are his panzer divisions.

"This ban has become a most dangerous paradox, a fallacy and a mockery of justice."

On July 23 the Defense of Canada Regulations Committee of the House of Commons recommended the lifting of the ban. On July 31 Mr. St. Laurent spoke in the House.

"If the ban on the Communist party in Canada is lifted," he said, "it will be equivalent to legalizing the Communist party in Canada." He went on to say that the recommendation of the committee would be considered. His evasion was in keeping with the policy of the government.

"Mr. St. Laurent's evasive statement can only bring jubilation to the camp of Hitler," I answered in a press interview, "in the knowledge that the anti-Communist smokescreen still works in Canada to the detriment of the war effort."

At this very time Charles Crate, former editor of the fascist newspaper *The Thunderbolt*, was enjoying complete freedom. He was actively circulating anti-Semitic propaganda modelled on that of Herr Goebbels. He was employed on a government job. Vichy agents were coming and going with impunity. The Knights of Jacques Cartier, the Ukrainian Nazi organizations and the Toronto die-hard Tories were lobbying, jointly and separately, at Ottawa against the lifting of the ban.

In August we took a step that forced a change. We were convinced that the time had come when Tim Buck and his colleagues, against whom there were internment orders outstanding, must be restored to their rightful places in public life. I was sure the hour had come to take definite steps to that end. Tim and I talked it over and we agreed that I would

approach the department of justice, asking for an understanding that his case and the others would be speedily dealt with if he and his friends agreed to place themselves in custody. The arrangement was made. On the appointed morning Tim and his friends walked into the law office of J. L. Cohen in downtown Toronto. Someone phoned the R.C.M.P. to ask when they were going to arrive. They were told the men would have to come to the R.C.M.P. office at Beverley and Dundas Streets. Here were the wanted men, the much-hunted Communist leaders, waiting for the police to come, and being told that they must go to the police!

Tim and the others were lodged in the Don jail. They occupied a separate corridor, and there played host to Premier Hepburn one afternoon when he dropped in to see what these Communist anti-fascists looked like. Public sentiment had advanced to such a point that he and others had declared themselves against the ban. Within twelve days all the hearings had been held, and early in October 1942 they walked out of the Don jail free men. No jails could now hold the Communist leaders. All the interned anti-fascists were released.

Crowds gathered at the station on repeated occasions as we welcomed our friends home. In Winnipeg a great reception was accorded their veteran leader, Alderman Jacob Penner, on his return, and later those staunch leaders of the Ukrainian-Canadian workers, John Navis and Matthew Shatulsky.

Our fight had won a wonderful victory. In Toronto, at the Maple Leaf Gardens, the appearance on the same platform of Mr. Hepburn and Tim Buck spoke eloquently of the undeniable strength of the Communist position on the question of a united war against Hitler.

The recommendation of the parliamentary committee for the lifting of the ban was not implemented by the government until August 17, 1945. The minister of justice stood in the way.

On October 16, 1942, in a sudden flash of truth, the *Globe and Mail* said: "The real reasons the ban on the Communist party is not lifted are those which keep Mr. Rene Ristelhueber in Ottawa. The ban is maintained and the Vichy representative of the evil Petain-Laval crowd is kept in Canada for one and the same reason." It was evident even at that early date that the new minister was a man engaged in international intrigue with the Vatican and other world coteries of reactionary plotting.

At that time the dissolution of the Communist International was seized upon, even by left-liberal writers like C. H. Huestis in the *Star*, to create new confusion about communism. I undertook to reply to Mr. Huestis. I pointed out that this was one more realistic facing of facts on the part of the Communist movement, not a new "zig-zag" as the press declared. The Communist movement was not created by the formation of the Communist International and was not dissolved by discontinuing the latter. The Communist movement grew within the social body as a natural outgrowth of social conditions. The Canadian Communist movement was native to Canada. I saw it grow from the beginning.

My life has been inseparable from the life of Canada. My experience has been shaped and moulded by Canada's history. I have experienced the full gamut of capitalism's development. In the short space of my own lifetime I have seen this system pass from its unquestioned dominance throughout the world to its present condition of senile decay. And I have seen it spread wreckage and ruin across the earth and terrible social suffering throughout my own country. Because I love Canada these experiences made me a Communist. Communism is Canadian because it shows that there is a way out of the conditions of hatred, crime, disease, poverty, unemployment and war.

I serve my country's highest interests when I fight for peace and friendship between Canada and the Soviet Union. There is no higher Canadian patriotism than the patriotism of the class-conscious worker who is striving and fighting to help Canada forward to socialism.

CHAPTER TWENTY

All My Life A Seed Sower

THESE CHAPTERS TELL the story of my life. I have given freely of my time and what ability I possess to the great working-class movement during the past twenty-five years. This period has been one of severe struggle. I am in the front line yet. I will be there for a while longer. And then I will not be there. It has been a grand struggle and the final victory in Canada seems to be much nearer.

Reactionary western capitalism had a plan in World War II to smash down the new Socialist Society. They made the fascist states their weapons. But then they had to help the Soviet Union to destroy them. Their destruction was a mighty event in human history. It left the road clearer for the march forward of those who will gather up the thorns and briars and other rubbish to be cast into the fires. Then will the ground of the earth be clean for the laying of the foundations of a new social order.

Nothing could be more disruptive morally than the sorry role of the British, American and Canadian statesmen during and after this war. Their perfidious schemes helped to bring about the war. They opened the Second Front only when they saw that the Red Army would drive Hitler into the Atlantic Ocean. And our heroic dead were not yet laid to rest when they started scheming a new war against the Land of

Socialism. What mean and contemptible men these are! They call themselves Christian. They dare to take the name of Jesus on their lips. They are an abomination before mankind.

The Canadian spy scare was one part of this plot. It was concocted to help prepare the ground for war. What great secrets did our allies, the Russians, get from Canada? Maybe they found out who was behind the scoundrel Franco and the criminal government of Chiang Kai-shek? Maybe they learned of the United States plan to grab colonies and war bases around the globe? Maybe they learned about the plan to wage oil wars on the people of Indonesia and against the Jews of Palestine? These imperialists are the friends of small nations? What a hollow mockery and pretense!

The world is sharply divided into two camps. The reactionary camp, headed by the United States government, is trying to save capitalism and hold back the course of human history. The progressive camp is fighting to save the world from destruction. This camp is headed by the Soviet Union. I have faith that man will find salvation from the gangs of human robbers and murderers who serve Wall Street, as well as from the deadly superstitions imposed upon his mind. Now for the first time since I was born the peace forces in the world are stronger than the imperialist warmongers.

The world is in a stage of transition, passing over an area between the last phase of the dying, but not yet dead, system of capitalism and the already born, but as yet not universally established, system of socialism. The new always appears weaker than the old, but its very birth and development testify to its ultimate victory. As I cast my thoughts back over the years the marvel is the mighty stride of progress mankind has made. How the world has been transformed since I was a boy! To some the old order appears strong, but its strength is a thing of the past. In my lifetime I have seen the old despotic

kings of Europe swept away and the new despots of fascism suffer the same fate. The old capitalism is fast dying, giving place to the new order in ever-widening areas of the earth. That is the law of life.

The "iron curtain" that hangs over Europe is created by British and American imperialism. Its thick clouds of confusion and deception blot out the sunlight. Behind every proposal they make there lurks some secret design to advance their own capitalist interests without regard for the people. Western Europe is lying in the slums. Nevertheless the prospects for freedom and a better social order in Europe were never brighter than today. The Roman Papacy and the capitalist gangster politicians will not prevail.

The old world is becoming the new. Socialism has been successfully established in the Soviet Union. A fully classless society is advancing there. Soon the economic basis of socialism will be completed in many other countries in central and eastern Europe. And then will follow the vast land of China. I shall not live to see socialism established in my own native land, but I have lived to see the world-balance turn definitely to the socialist side. There is not the shadow of a doubt about the future final triumph of socialism over the whole earth.

I regret to see North America become the last stand of the old order. The new world of my youth — so full of promise then — has now become the old world. It is only here in Canada and the United States that people can still be misled by the false appearance of strength in the old order. But this very appearance is a product of war. Our Canadian capitalism grew momentarily fat and prosperous on the agonies of war. North America is the best proof that the death-knell of capitalism has struck. The gigantic productive powers of North America, after ten years of depression, could only be made to

run by the war. This flush of post-war prosperity comes from death, not from life.

I still have copies of a syllabus which I prepared on poverty away back in 1915. It is still valid. Since 1915 I have seen the burden of poverty grow heavier upon the people. Only for brief periods has there been any let-up.

The basic social feature of capitalist society is that millions of toilers spend their lives producing great wealth for the small capitalist class to possess and enjoy. A large part of the working class lives in perpetual misery from day to day. Many come to see me as the Director of the Labor Welfare Bureau to seek some help in their hard personal struggle for life. I do my utmost, from day to day, to help each one. There is no individual answer. But they are my people. They are dear to my heart. When I wake up in the night, as I often do, many dark pictures of their struggles with injustice, maltreatment, fraud, meanness and inhumanity troop up into my mind. They sink by the thousands into premature graves. They disappear into mental hospitals. They retreat into the slums where capitalist society hides its cancers and disease. They are the lowliest victims of this rotten order, but no worker lives far from the fear of utter poverty.

Capitalist greed imposes these conditions. Jesus said: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Under capitalism this can be only a sham. No man or class of men degrading fellow-men to a position of economic subservience can obey this Communist precept. No society which has at its center exploitation of man by man for profit can ever realize human Brotherhood. Brotherhood can only exist on a firm economic basis. Capitalist exploitation must be overthrown before it can be achieved.

There is no neutral position in this struggle. We Canadians must not be misled. The future is not with the violence of the

Atom Bomb, nor with the greed of the Almighty Dollar. The Canadian capitalists are afraid of the Soviet Union not because of her military power alone, but because she represents a new social order on this earth. There need be no fear of Soviet aggression. They know that well. They are really afraid of the Canadian working class and common people, who are certain to overthrow them and establish socialism here. Their war plan is first of all a pretext for violent repression at home.

Our present capitalist leaders do not serve Canada. As a young man I could be persuaded to believe that Laurier, in spite of the greed and grabbing, had some feeling for his country. But the politicians at the helm today remind me of that breed of unscrupulous and unprincipled lawyer which I have seen so often in our courts; willing to work for the richest client, regardless of all moral considerations. They allowed our Canadian economy to come under almost complete control of the big monopoly corporations of Wall Street. Indeed, they are deliberately and eagerly aiding Wall Street's conspiracy. I regard them as national traitors.

Monopoly by the rich of Wall Street will bring only ruin to the nation. The youth must fight to reclaim Canada. The future belongs to Canada's people. When a lad, I dreamed of Canada's future. It was not to be one of poverty and war. Canada is now 79 years old: I am 75. I know my dreams will come true. Canada's future will be one of abundance and happiness for all. The people will win Canada's freedom from Wall Street. I have faith in the Canadian spirit. I have faith in the Canadian working class. I have faith in the Canadian youth.

If a man wants to work for Brotherhood, he must recognize the laws of motion in society and cooperate with them. The productive forces under capitalism — social production carried on by all the workers — come into conflict with capitalist pri-

vate ownership. The gradual growth of the productive forces finally leads up to the bursting point. Gradual change is the process by which a leap is prepared and evoked. We are now in that period of fundamental change. It is futile for the liberal and social-reformist to inveigh against "revolutionary doctrine." There is no other doctrine of human Brotherhood.

The working class has been held back and delayed in its mission of replacing the capitalist system by the confusion of social-reformism. The events of the past few decades have taught me the clear lesson that there is no such thing as a gradual, piecemeal transformation of capitalism into socialism. The state organs of forcible control over society in the hands of the capitalists stand in the way. The road indicated by the social-reformists has been explored. I, too, explored this road and I realize how difficult it is for many sincere seekers after the New Day to escape its maze. It looks like the easiest road but it is not. It leads to fascism, because by its failures and betrayals in rejecting the path of struggle the workers are weakened and confused. If this lesson could be grasped by Canadian labor, much distress and suffering could be avoided in the future.

A new state power of the workers and farmers must be established finally. The means of production must be owned in common. Classes must disappear. That is the essential basis of the Brotherhood of Man. Under this new society Canada's true development as a land of free people will commence and great will be the result.

Naturally, as their system becomes unworkable, the capitalists grow more violent in their attacks upon the Communists. They call forth the uttermost lies to hurl against us. It is as if the purity of the new must be tested a million times against the poison of the old. Each test helps thousands of honest men to see through the veil of lies. There must be no retreat. We

must be resolute and unafraid. The Canadian spirit, born of the pioneer courage that made Canada, will refuse to cringe.

Looking backward through the years, turning over the pages of the book of memory, I see three turning-points in my life. I might use the language of orthodoxy and say that I have been converted three times, and have each time been brought into a higher and richer and more real sense of value; each time I followed the vision of a higher service to human Brotherhood and gave all I had to give to its success.

My first conversion took place when I was in my teens. That experience led me through the fanciful, but vague, religious emotionalism and sentimentalism induced in the youth of eager temperament by the dramatic evangelism of fifty years ago. I thought the world could be saved from the wretched conditions I could see on every hand by a miracle of salvation.

Then came the second conversion. It was the social vision, which is a crisis in the life of every man. I saw the Kingdom of God as a just social order to be established among men. This produced a complete revolution in my life. I had to remake myself. I had to rediscover the message of Jesus and the old Hebrew prophets. Jesus was no longer to me an evangelist, dividing men into the saved and the unsaved. He was a great Socialist, a Communist. I saw economic robbery, injustice and poverty, as the evils that must be overcome. And I found that the only heresy to many leading churchmen was the social heresy. I was greatly perplexed.

An assured career of considerable prominence was opening before me. The highest church offices were being offered to me. The only objection to me in influential circles was my social gospel. The acid test came in the great strike movement after the first world war. No one but myself knows what mental conflict I went through in those days. For me everything was

at stake. I turned from the comfortable but stultified position, the rich friends and prominent career to go out with the struggling masses, fighting for the principles of social justice. I returned to the great working class where I proudly belong.

My third conversion brought me to a firm consciousness of reality. I left the church and with it I abandoned all religious forms. They are without content for me today, as they have no meaning for the great struggling masses of mankind. The experience of mankind is sufficient to account for all that we behold in human society today.

I know the truth of the words of Karl Marx when he described religion as "the sigh of the oppressed," the vision in the heavens of what could be achieved upon the earth.

"The roots of modern religion," wrote Lenin, "are deeply embedded in the social oppression of the working masses, and in their apparently complete helplessness before the blind forces of capitalism, which every day and every hour cause a thousand times more horrible suffering and torture for ordinary working folk than are caused by exceptional events such as war and earthquakes."

Scientific materialism constitutes the necessary basis for the achievement of a classless society, when heaven will be established upon the earth.

I found Brotherhood. I found the answers to my questions in communism. I found that the teachings of Jesus and the old Hebrew prophets surrender their truth only when interpreted through the light shed by communism. Today the proudest thing that I can say is: "I am a Communist."

Recently I attended a religious service in Maple Leaf Gardens. I was saddened and disappointed. The church is in retreat. It is not in line with the people who are marching ahead amid the wild storm of bigotry and selfishness toward the better order of society. Religion is in a crisis. Before the

advance of socialism and science, it is withdrawing into the mists. In my own days in the church I saw the old hell-fire and brimstone religion pass away. Now the decline of religion is gaining momentum.

Jesus was a worker. He was in revolt against Roman oppression. Man's striving for Brotherhood found expression in the line of old prophets leading up to Jesus. His followers lived as primitive Communists. "They had all things in common. And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men as every man had need." (*Acts 2:44-45*).

When reactionary writers want to ridicule the Communists, they represent them as proposing to do what Jesus and his followers did. Their caricatures of communism are really a mockery of Jesus. Under ancient conditions communism could be only a division of simple goods on the basis of need. Under modern conditions, what will be held in common will not be personal possessions, but the immense machinery of production, capable of producing abundance for all.

The church has not learned this meaning of Jesus. The church is not a Brotherhood. The liberal minds in the church complain about the apathy of the church as compared with the vitality of communism. But they cannot see the truth. The Communists represent the real spirit of Jesus. They believe in and practise the Brotherhood of Man, and in this belief they stretch out their hands in friendship to their Christian brothers.

I am like the man who went out to find a pearl and when he had found the pearl of great price, he sold all he had and bought it. I have found the pearl of great price. I have sold all I had and I have come into possession of that imperishable jewel. I am sure now. I have no further misgivings. I know the reason for the course of history. Mankind will look up at the sun and breathe.

"A specter is haunting Europe, the specter of communism." Thus wrote Karl Marx and Frederick Engels in the *Communist Manifesto* one hundred years ago. At that time this figure of speech was appropriate. But today it cannot be used. Communism is no specter in our day. It is a mighty movement, encircling the earth, holding within its ranks by conviction millions of people of all races and climes, of all ages in life, and of all degrees of understanding. The firm basis of science underlies its teachings, and the irrevocable truths and events of history constitute the sinews of its arguments.

Thousands of Canadians are Communists. Canada needs tens of thousands more. Men and women, they must be motivated by the highest patriotism. They must lead the battle against the world conspiracy of greedy imperialists. They must fight against every move to impoverish, weaken and divide the workers. They must fight for equality, economic and social, of men and women, white and colored, Jew and Gentile. Above all they must fight untiringly for peace between the nations. The stronger the Communist movement in Canada, the less will be the hardship and the pain imposed upon us all in the passing of the capitalist order.

Communism will create conditions wherein the happiness and well-being of the masses of Canadian people will advance to the maximum. Communism will develop the earth into a happy home for mankind.

I sowed the seed. All my life, I have been a seed sower. And for the rest, I will keep on with the job. I am a happy man. My highest satisfaction is to know that I have invested my life in human progress.

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